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ABSTRACT

This packet contains lesson plans with real-life service projects that students can do throughout the school year, from September 2000 to August 2001. The lesson plans in the packet provide teachers with flexibility to offer them to students as young as grade 5 and as old as grade 12. The lesson plans, although essentially social studies, service learning, or civics lessons, can be used to enhance other skills, such as research techniques, problem solving, creative writing, and personal development. Each lesson plan in the packet features a variety of class activities, individual assignments, a real class service project that will be determined and implemented by the students, and reflection activities. Keeping a student journal is a component of all 12-months' plans. Each lesson plan varies in time commitment; some require only one or two class periods, while others require as many as five class periods. The packet contains a calendar of "timely tips" and real-life service projects. Includes a list of resources. (BT)

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Catch the Spirit! Lesson Plans, September 2000-August 2001.

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CATCH THE SPIRIT!

Lesson Plans

September 2000 - August 2001

Real-life service projects that your students can do throughout the school year, from September, 2000 - August, 2001.

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Brought to you by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards and America's top youth volunteers.

CATCH THE SPIRIT!

...and make a world of difference every day of the year!

Dear Teachers,

Can we as educators solve the problems of world hunger, abuse, poverty, crime, and racial intolerance? No, but we can encourage our students to take action and open the doors of change.

Young people may only need the smallest push to decide to offer their time and talents to make their communities better places to live. A 1995 study commissioned by Prudential found that an overwhelming majority of teens (95%) believe it is important for people to volunteer for their community. According to 71%, communities would be better places to live if more adults volunteered. And 81% feel they would be better if more students volunteered.

The concept of providing children values while teaching history, English, science and the other basics has been practiced by educators for years now, though it has just in the past decade become a formal educational element. Research conducted 70 or more years ago by educational theorists found that schools have the power to instill in children the desire to improve society. Not only does service learning build character in children, but it also may help students to better grasp basic lessons, to apply what they learn in the classroom to real life situations.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards created the Catch the Spirit community service calendar and lesson plan booklet to help you incorporate service-learning into your teaching. You may choose to conduct the regular monthly lesson plans or incorporate service-learning projects into any subject area. Whether you teach math or civics, whether your students are in fifth grade or college-bound, Catch the Spirit gives you the flexibility you need to provide service-learning opportunities for all your students and help them experience the importance of serving others.

We hope this Catch the Spirit community service calendar will serve as a useful, practical, and powerful resource for your classroom. As we teach our students to become productive, caring members of society, we too will be making a tremendous difference by teaching tomorrow's leaders the skills and instilling in them the desire to serve.

Gerald Tirozzi
Executive Director, National Association
of Secondary School Principals

We'd Like to Hear From You!

Have an idea you'd like to share, or a success story from your classroom? How did you make the most out of the Catch the Spirit community service calendar and lesson plans? Please contact us at 973-802-4568, or spiritcalendar@prudential.com.

"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

What is service learning?

"Service learning is an educational method that involves students in challenging tasks that meet genuine community needs and requires the application of knowledge, skills and systematic reflection on the experience."

National Youth Leadership Council

The Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning Practice

Effective service-learning:

(1) requires the application of concepts, content and skills from the academic disciplines and actively involves students;
(2) engages students in tasks that challenge and stretch them cognitively and developmentally;
(3) uses assessment as a way to enhance student learning as well as to document and evaluate how well students have met content and skills standards;
(4) engages students in service tasks that have clear goals, meet genuine needs in the school or community, and have significant consequences for themselves or others;
(5) employs systematic evaluation of the service effort and its outcomes;
(6) seeks to maximize student voice in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating the service project;
(7) values diversity through its participants, its practice, and its outcomes;
(8) promotes communication and interaction with the community and encourages partnerships and collaboration;
(9) prepares students for all aspects of their service experience including understanding their role, the skills and information required, safety precautions, and sensitivity to the people with whom they will be working;
(10) includes student reflection as a central force in the fulfillment of curricular objectives and is done before, during, and after service;
(11) acknowledges, celebrates, and further validates students' service.

National Service Learning Cooperative

The CATCH THE SPIRIT Lesson Plans

The Catch the Spirit lesson plans were written to accompany the Catch the Spirit community service calendar. Each plan relates directly to the twelve profiles of past honorees of The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, because we believe that young people will be motivated to volunteer if they are exposed to real-life examples of young people who have done so.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards has thousands of examples of young volunteers. Since the program began in 1995, it has honored more than 25,000 young people in grades 5 through 12 at the local, state, and national level for outstanding acts of volunteerism. The twelve young people your students will read about in Catch the Spirit were named among the top ten youth volunteers in the nation between the years of 1996 and 1999.

To make the most of this unique educational tool, we suggest you post the calendar in a prominent location in the classroom. As you prepare each lesson, copy and distribute that month's profile page (copy-ready profiles precede each lesson plan in this booklet), and instruct your students to read that month's profile. For additional real-life stories about young volunteers, check out the list of current honorees at www.prudential.com.

What subjects do these lesson plans cover?

These lessons are essentially social studies, service learning, or civics lessons. Students will also learn or enhance other skills, such as research techniques, problem-solving, creative writing and personal development. These lessons can also be used as an adjunct to history, language, science, or other subjects you are teaching for which these lessons would be timely and appropriate.

Be creative! Home economics teachers may find Brandon Mulcunry's community garden an interesting lesson for their students, and physical education teachers may want to expose their students to Kristen Deaton's Anyone Can Softball story. Over in the English classes, teachers can use Pettus Randall's Read and Lead program as an interesting lesson as well.

History teachers may find unique lessons in the quotes featured on each page of the calendar. These quotes are from famous authors and public figures who either overcame great obstacles to achieve success, or who served their communities with great passion. The quotes, and the persons to whom they are attributed, make great lessons in themselves, and by adding a community service component, teachers are breathing new life into a history lesson. Check out the resource page for places to go to get more great quotes.

Anything goes – community service can be incorporated into just about any lesson. It's a fun and meaningful way to help kids learn the basics, and help them choose to help others at the same time. It's also an easy and quick way for teachers to get that volunteerism message across without devoting an entirely separate lesson to service learning.

What grade level are these lessons intended for?

These lessons were written to provide you with flexibility to offer them to students as young as grade 5 and as old as grade 12. You should evaluate the suitability of each component of these plans for your classroom by considering the maturity level of your students, the available time commitment, school and community resources. Then, feel free to take our ideas and modify them to suit your audience.

What do the assignments consist of?

Each lesson plan features a variety of class activities, individual assignments, a real class service project that will be determined and implemented by your students, and reflection activities. Though each lesson plan includes certain assignments, in many cases your students are choosing their own assignments. Student input is a key component in all of these lesson plans, and as your class addresses each social issue, they will brainstorm projects to implement. The assignments, then, will come from these chosen projects. You'll assign individuals, or groups, to assist in the various tasks involved to implement the service projects.

In addition, keeping a student journal is a consistent component of all twelve months' plans. Make the most of this journal by encouraging regular entries on a variety of suggested and free-choice topics, and by providing class time for writing, sharing and brainstorming ideas. Stress the importance of individual ideas. The best example you can provide is to use the allotted class time each week (or day!) to write and share your own journal entries while the students do the same.

Using the newspaper or Internet as a prime information resource is key to many of these plans. Free classroom copies of your local newspaper are usually available by calling the main office of the paper a few days before they're needed. Students may also bring their own copies from home or search the paper's current issue (and database of back issues) via the Internet.

How much time is required to teach the Catch the Spirit lesson plans?

Each lesson plan varies in time commitment. Some require only one to two class periods. Others require as many as five. Others incorporate homework assignments that will stretch out over a week or more.

But, the most important factor in determining time involvement will be the service projects you and your students choose. In most of the lesson plans, the service project is not detailed – that is for you and your class to determine based on what problems your individual community is facing. In other plans, you are offered several choices from which to choose. Some projects require a bit of time each day or week over a period of weeks. Others involve

Attention Community-Based Organizations

The Catch the Spirit calendar and lesson plans can be an active component of youth leadership camps, scout activities, and other youth-oriented community programs. Review the materials, and modify them to best suit your needs. Then, share your successes with us. We'd love to hear how you made Catch the Spirit work for you!

entire class periods until the project is complete. This is up to you. We have designed these lesson plans to provide you with the flexibility to present important lessons in service learning and volunteerism in the allotted time you have available.

And, if you only have time to conduct one lesson plan all year, that's great. Even one exposure to community service can encourage a young person to volunteer. You can even post the calendar and offer students extra credit for volunteering – without ever conducting a formal lesson. You'll be teaching even when you're not teaching.

What about lesson plans in July and August?

We've provided you with profiles and accompanying lesson plans for all 12 months of the year. If you teach summer school, our July and August lesson plans may add some spice to your curriculum. Or, conduct these plans at other times throughout the year. You could also discuss ideas from the summer lesson plans as part of your year-end wrap up, and offer suggestions for how students can volunteer during their summer break.

How do I measure student achievement and provide grades?

These lesson plans contain at least one concrete opportunity for measuring student achievement. Measurement may take the form of research activities, individual or group reports, a written product intended for public use (letters to the editor, articles for the school paper, etc.), consistency in journal-writing, participation in a debate or class discussion, or creative artistic expression.

Most importantly, though, is how each student progresses with their assigned responsibility for the chosen service project. You'll also be grading students on their personal development and lessons learned from their involvement in the service projects. Once the service project is selected, determine your own evaluation plan before beginning each assignment.

Do the plans have to be conducted in the month they are featured?

These lesson plans do not have to be followed strictly. We provide you with 12 unique ways you can incorporate the concept of service learning into your classroom. If you really like the September lesson plan, but don't have time in September, that's fine. Use September's lesson plan whenever you think it's most appropriate for your class. We even give you ideas for switching lesson dates with ones that would also be timely for the subject matter. For instance, the following events can be great platforms for any lesson about community service:

September 17	Citizenship Day
September 24	National Good Neighbor Day
October 28	Make a Difference Day
November 5 -11	Random Acts of Kindness Week
November 13	World Kindness Day
December 5	International Volunteer Day
February 17	Random Acts of Kindness Day
April 22 - 28	National Volunteer Week

Are there more service learning resources, and calendar of events listings available?

There are numerous organizations teachers can turn to for additional service learning ideas, lesson plans, and other valuable resources. Also, the many recognition days, weeks, and months we feature in the Catch the Spirit community service calendar are sponsored by various associations who may offer special resources for your celebration of these events. We provide you contact information for as many of these organizations as we can in the Resource Listing in the back of this booklet, or in the calendar itself.

Where can my students get more information about volunteering?

There are many national organizations that welcome young volunteers, and we provide a list of many in the calendar. We suggest you share this with your students so you may further direct them toward an organization that suits their needs.

Some students have a passion for helping others, but don't know where to start. "Catch the Spirit: A Student's Guide to Community Service," is a helpful resource for young people who need direction. It was produced by The Prudential Spirit of Community Initiative with cooperation from the United States Department of Education. Get a copy on the web at www.prudential.com/community/spirit/volunteer, or write to The Consumer Information Center, Department 506E, Pueblo, Colorado, 81009.

School, parent and community recognition and participation

School and community involvement in service learning is an essential element to success. And recognition of students' volunteerism provides the additional motivation for them to choose to volunteer in the future.

Most of our lesson plans aim to involve members of the school and the community by inviting guest speakers to address the class, and by conducting certain projects such as canned food drives. However, we encourage a regular involvement in order to validate your student's work and to encourage others to volunteer. For example, invite the local press to observe your class researching, developing, and implementing a community service project. Have your students coordinate a volunteer expo at the school for the benefit of fellow students and the community. Secure your principal's approval to post your students' work in common areas for other students to see and inquire about. Invite parents to join in a community service project at least once during the year.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

Most of all, when your school participates in The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards and nominates a student for recognition, you are sending a powerful message to everyone that volunteering is an honorable choice students make. Don't forget to encourage those students who are volunteering to apply for The 2001 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. The deadline for students to submit applications is October 31, 2000, and your school must select an honoree for state-level judging by November 7. To receive a packet of materials on The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, complete and send back the tear-off reply card on the back page of this booklet, or write to spiritcalendar@prudential.com. Complete instructions can also be found at www.prudential.com/community.

September, 2000

Gabriella Combats Violence

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

Aesop

"Seems like there was always something going on across the street at the high school – sirens, police cars, flashing lights, gangs, drugs, even kids smoking and drinking right outside the fence of our school and then throwing their trash on our playground. It wasn't right," says Gabriella Contreras, of Tucson, Arizona, then nine years old. "My friends and I were going to be students at that high school in a few years, but none of us wanted to attend a school that wasn't safe. I knew that somebody had to do something that would promote peace and end all the violence and hatred."

That "somebody" was Gabriella. Gabriella wanted to spread a message of peace. She gathered a small group of friends who got to work one afternoon making signs saying "Stop the Violence," "We Want Peace," and "Say No To Drugs." The next morning they held the first peace march ever seen in front of Roskruge School. The response? Great!

"I decided to hold weekly meetings during lunch to talk about projects that would promote peace and help kids use their time and energy in positive ways. Sometimes people made fun of us, but I didn't care." Club B.A.D.D.D. (that means "Be Alert Don't Do Drugs") was there to do good.

That was five years ago. Since then, Club B.A.D.D.D. has organized an amazing number of community service projects, including food and clothing drives, school cleanups, annual peace marches, an anti-drug art gallery, recycling campaigns and a citywide youth volunteer summit. They've held bake sales, auctions and talent shows to raise money for library books, field trips, eyeglasses for needy kids and even a baby's heart operation. "Today more than 500 people are involved in Club B.A.D.D.D. events – and we've become the "cool" thing to do at school!"

Gabriella was a National Honoree in The 1999 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. She is now a youth spokesperson for the Hispanic Youth Conference, and speaks nationwide about Club B.A.D.D.D. and violence prevention.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

September is National School Success Month. Minnesota's **Nathan Bertelsen,** 18, wanted to teach at-risk elementary students in inner city Minneapolis that learning was fun. He pioneered "Backpack Tutors," a group of trained student volunteers who make weekly visits to elementary schools in urban Minneapolis.

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month. 17-year-old **Laura Berman** wanted to share her joy of reading with third graders in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. She developed a library awareness project that included a classroom program, personal library cards and a free tee-shirt (purchased with donations) with the slogan: "Your library card....don't leave home without it!"

September, 2000

Gabriella Combats Violence

Subject Matter
Civics, creative writing, current events, problem solving, research, service learning

Materials
Construction paper, markers, highlighters or crayons, white board or butcher paper, library and Internet access (if possible), copies of current local newspapers, student journals.

Overview
Students are asked to write a short journal entry describing how safe they feel at school. After sharing their answers via class discussion, Gabriella Contreras' profile is read to the class. Further discussion centers on what Gabriella did to promote peace, plus any other ideas students can brainstorm on their own. Students then select and implement a service project intended to promote peace.

Day 1

Class Activity
"Do I feel safe at school?" Ask students to write a short journal entry answering that question, then allow approximately ten minutes of class discussion time to share their answers. Keep a brief written record of class responses on the white board or butcher paper. Read Gabriella's profile to the class. What did Gabriella do to promote peace? Was she working for short or long-term solutions? Discuss. Ask students to brainstorm (individually or in small groups at teacher discretion) other ideas that would promote peace at their school and in their neighborhood. Discuss these ideas.

Assignment
Students are to review newspapers and magazines for articles, advertisements, editorials or letters that promote peace, non-violence and positive contributions to the community. Students then write a journal entry explaining how they would promote peace.

Service Project

Call on students to share their ideas for promoting peace. Brainstorm additional ideas and select one. Could it work? How would it work? Who would need to be involved? Encourage volunteers to draw up your project's action plan based on class input. Assign each student, or groups, to particular tasks. What additional research is needed? Do you need special materials? Be sure to involve other students, parents, and members of the community.

Reflection Activity

Once the service project has been implemented share experiences during class. Ask each student to write one sentence in their journals summarizing how they felt during the project. Read sentences aloud, and discuss. How can students maintain a peaceful environment all year long? Keep a class "Peace Journal," recording individual and small group volunteer efforts, random acts of kindness, stories in the school newspaper highlighting the positive efforts of students and staff, and a "Peace Graffiti" page for any ideas, quotes, stories, or anonymous words of thanks.

Additional Ideas

(1) Give each student one large sheet of construction paper. Students are to design a poster promoting peace and non-violence. Collect and share each student's poster. Arrange a student "Peace and Non-Violence Art Gallery" in the classroom or somewhere around the school.

(2) With permission from school administrators, organize a class "Peace March" before school or during lunch.

(3) Using the library and/or Internet resources, ask students to find stories and biographies of famous people in history who worked for peace and non-violence. Share findings with the class. Start a "Peace Quotes" bulletin board or wall border with quotes from these individuals.

(4) Ask students to write notes of gratitude to strangers who've done something to promote peace and non-violence. Send the notes.

Also in September: September 15 is International Literacy Day. As part of a reading or language lesson, ask students to tutor elementary children from an underserved area.

October, 2000

"Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person."
Mother Teresa

Brandon's Garden of Life

Brandon Mulcunry has been a Boy Scout since the second grade, so volunteering has always been a part of his life. Clothing drives, building projects, park clean-up days. You name it, he's done it.

So why did he decide to plant a garden?

Do a math problem and you'll understand.

St. Elizabeth's House serves over 200,000 meals each year to needy people in Hartford County, Connecticut. Its annual budget? $39,000.

Divide $39,000 by 200,000 meals for hungry men, women and children. That's less than 20 cents per meal.

Get it? Brandon did.

His Scout troop and their families volunteered to help plant, water, weed, pick and deliver the produce. They rented a plot of land from the city for $25. Then, Brandon made a list of everything required for a large garden like seeds, tools and fertilizer. He looked up the addresses and phone numbers of companies selling those products, then got busy writing letters and making phone calls. The response? "Everything we needed was donated." Brandon was in business – the garden business.

Was it easy? "No, but it was worth it." After four months of pulling weeds, watering, and fighting beetles on the eggplant vines and mold on tomato plants, they started harvesting. "We picked tomatoes, peppers, string beans, zucchini, eggplant, beets, squash, turnips, lettuce, parsley, and basil – over three tons of vegetables."

"I planted a garden because I thought it might help some needy people," says Brandon. "As we delivered boxes of produce every week, I had a chance to put real faces on the people I was helping. Seeing the smiles on the men, women, and children at that shelter made me realize that I wasn't just cultivating a garden of tomatoes, beans and peppers – I was helping others grow a garden of life."

Brandon was a National Honoree in The 1997 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Now a senior in high school, Brandon is teaching younger members of his Scout troop to assume responsibility for the "garden of life" when he leaves for college in the fall of 2001.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

Happy Halloween! "Trick or Treat So Others Can Eat!" is what people hear in Westminster, Colorado, on the day before Halloween. 18-year-old **Dawn Stockwell** created this special canned food collection drive when she found out that Westminster's Food Bank of the Rockies faced a serious shortage of food for homeless and needy people.

October 8-14 is Fire Prevention Week. 13-year-old **Cory Snyder** of Bowie, Maryland organized a children's fund-raising campaign called "Project Rescue Vision" and collected more than $25,000 to buy an Infrared Imaging System (IRIS) for local firefighters. Having this equipment means firefighters can see through smoke and darkness to find people – and save lives. Later, his brother Brock led another effort to provide more life-saving equipment.

October, 2000

Brandon's Garden of Life

Subject Matter
Civics, creative writing, personal development, research, service learning, social studies

Materials
Student journals, access to library and/or Internet research materials, paper and pencils, white board or butcher paper, markers

Overview
Students are asked to describe what it's like to be hungry. Small groups research the hunger problem in their local community or state, and then report their findings to the class. A speaker from a local food bank or homeless shelter addresses the class. Students brainstorm and implement a service project to help alleviate hunger in their community.

Preparation
Contact the director of a local homeless shelter or food bank. Schedule either a guest speaker or time for a small group of students to visit the shelter.

Day 1

Class Activity
Read Brandon Mulcunry's profile to the class. Has anyone in the class ever missed lunch or gone a whole day without food? If you're hungry and smell hamburgers or fresh cookies in the school cafeteria, how does your body react? What do you think? What does it feel like? What if you can't have any of that food? What would that feel like?

Assignment
Ask students to write a short journal entry describing how it feels to be hungry from both a physical and emotional viewpoint.

Day 2

Class Activity
Divide the class into small groups. Using current newspapers, magazines, the library or Internet resources, research the problem of hunger in your community or state. What is being done to alleviate the problem, and who's working on it? Ask each group to be ready to report its findings to the class. Record useful statistics, comments, or other findings on the white board or butcher paper. Keep a list of solutions on a separate section of the board or paper.

Day 3

Class Activity
Guest speaker talks to class about his or her work as a shelter volunteer or staff member, presenting the hunger and homeless problems of the community. Ask students to take notes, and allow time for questions. If a small group has visited a shelter, the group should present its findings at this point. Again, ask students to take notes, and allow time for questions.

Assignment
Brandon Mulcunry planted a real garden of life, but there are other ways to help feed hungry people in the community. Lead a class discussion of possible ways students can help, either individually or as a group. Refer back to research findings and the speaker or small group presentation. As a homework assignment, ask students to write a short journal entry describing how they as individuals can make a difference or plant their own garden of life.

Service Project

Share students' ideas for solving the hunger problem in their community. Can these ideas be implemented? Has anyone done it before? Take a vote by anonymous ballot to determine which idea the class would like to pursue. Once the project is selected, divide the class into work groups and assign tasks. Dedicate class periods to make planning decisions and provide status reports. Students should prepare journal entries throughout the process. Implement the project involving as many members of the school and community as possible.

Reflection Activity

Once the hunger project is complete, ask students to write a thank-you letter assuming the position of a homeless person who benefitted from the service project. Read letters aloud, and discuss.

Additional Ideas

(1) Encourage students to volunteer to serve a meal at a local homeless shelter. Offer extra credit for those who do.

(2) Plant a garden on school property with assistance from the local garden club or nursery. Donate the harvest. Contact the National Gardening Association at www.garden.org for more information on youth garden grants.

Also in October: Daylight savings time ends on October 29. Offer extra credit to students who help younger children learn to tell time.

November, 2000

"If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help someone else."

Old Chinese Proverb

Eric is Stepp'n Up

Have you ever counted all the shoes in your closet? There are brand-name sneakers (two or three pairs), the flats and loafers, dress shoes and yeah, girls, all those pairs of high heels in different heights that coordinate with all those outfits.

Have you ever met anyone who's never, ever had a new pair of shoes? Eric Perlyn has -- and it changed his life.

Eric was 13 when he started "Stepp'n Up," a program that provides new shoes for needy children. Using gift money he'd received at his bar mitzvah, Eric took a family of 6 young boys shoe shopping.

It was an amazing afternoon. "As each was fitted, he'd look at his shoes, smile, then leap from his chair to march, stomp and whirl all over that shoe store. I knew then and there that I had to do this for more kids."

"Shoes do more than cover feet, you know," Eric says. "They play a significant role in how children feel about themselves. To many kids, new shoes mean the beginning of a sense of pride that they've never had. So many people take shoes for granted, but to these kids a simple pair of shoes can mean the world."

Each year Eric calls a local social services agency to get the names, ages and shoe sizes of 200-300 needy kids. Then he visits local shoe stores, writes manufacturers, speaks to civic and charity groups asking for cash donations, and organizes other students at his school to help "shoe" needy feet.

Shoes? Who would have thought?

Eric Perlyn was a 1996 Prudential Spirit of Community National Honoree. Now a senior at Duke University, he's extended the "Stepp'n Up" program to North Carolina, distributing over 2,000 pairs of shoes to underprivileged children in the Durham area.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

November is Great American Smokeout Month. 18-year-old **Derek Swierczek** (Palatine, Illinois) wanted to help stop underage smoking. He created and led a student anti-smoking campaign, persuading local government officials to have cigarette vending machines permanently removed from his town.

November 21 is National Stop the Violence Day. After reading about school shootings across the United States and then witnessing violence in his own neighborhood, 12-year-old **Theo Milonopoulos** and his brother **Niko** (Los Angeles, California) gathered over 10,000 kids' signatures on a petition asking the L.A. City Council to ban the sale of bullets in Los Angeles.

November, 2000

Eric is Stepp'n Up

Subject Matter
Civics, creative writing, personal development, service learning

Materials
Newspapers, Web access, student journals

Overview
Students are asked to reflect on how someone else said or did something that either helped them accomplish a task or just made them feel good (i.e. compliments, favors, unexpected acts of kindness, etc.) The class reads Eric Perlyn's profile. A speaker shares his or her story. Students are asked to perform 4-5 small acts of kindness over a period of two weeks.

Day 1

Class Activity
Read Eric Perlyn's profile to the class. How did Eric show kindness? Why? Arrange for a senior citizen, parent, social services worker, counselor, foster parent or public figure to speak to the class about the small, unexpected acts of giving and kindness that have helped that individual lead a happy, productive life. Allow time for questions. Why do you think this person did what he or she did? What was unique about the act of kindness?

Assignment
Students are asked to write a short paragraph in their journals describing how someone made them feel special. What did that person do? How did the act affect the student? Did the student's life change because of it?

Day 2

Class Activity
Review the assignment. Encourage volunteers to share their stories. Do they think they would also feel special if they were the ones performing the acts of kindness? Do they know of any one person or group who could use some help? Conduct a newspaper and Internet search on class time to identify local residents who are in need of a helping hand.

Assignment
Students are to list the names of people they would like to help, and how they plan to do so. Ideas should be simple, such as helping a senior citizen with household chores, or taking a young child to the park.

Service Project

For each student, make 4-5 paper cut-outs of a shoe. Review the students' lists of people in need, and their ideas for lending a hand. For each person they'd like to help, create a shoe with that person's name and the special thing the student will do for each person. Give students 1-2 weeks to perform their acts of kindness. As each act is complete, the student posts the shoe around the classroom in a designated area.

Reflection Activity

At the end of the 2 weeks, take a look around the room. How many shoes are posted? Did everyone step up to the challenge? What difficulties did the students face? How did they feel after performing each act of kindness? Ask students to reflect on the experience in their journals as well.

Additional Idea

Make random acts of kindness a year-round task for your students. Keep a supply of blank shoes on hand for students to decorate and post throughout the year. Count the shoes at the end of the year and discuss.

Also in November: National Stop the Violence Day is November 22. As part of a current events lesson, ask students how they would put a stop to school violence. Then implement the ideas as a class.

December, 2000

"The greatest grace of a gift, perhaps, is that it anticipates and admits of no return."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Emily's Gifts Go Far

Everybody in the small Appalachian community of Ironton, Ohio, knew Emily's Grandma. "She always had a few extra dollars in her purse to give to somebody whose baby needed medicine or to help a homeless family buy winter coats for their kids," Emily remembers. "My Grandmother never forgot what it was like to be poor. She worked her whole life, volunteered many hours each week and gave away at least half her salary. My Grandma was the kindest person I've ever met."

When Emily's grandmother died, Emily decided to honor her memory by continuing her volunteer work with needy children and their families. "I wanted to find a way to remember Grandma's spirit and goodness," Emily said. "I decided that Christmas was a good time to start."

Emily and her mother compiled a list of everyone they knew who'd grown up in the Appalachian mountain area, then sent each person a letter asking for donations of clothing, toys, books, canned food, and money. "Since these people had first-hand knowledge of the need, I was pretty confident of their response," Emily recalls. She also wrote letters to local stores and other businesses, called the newspapers, and spoke to church and community groups.

During that first Christmas, Emily provided Christmas gifts, food, clothing and other items to over fifty needy families. Since then, hundreds of thousands of dollars in goods and services have been donated to "Grandma's Gifts," the non-profit foundation Emily started to continue her grandmother's legacy. "Grandma's Gifts" also helps provide eyeglasses, medical and dental care, camp scholarships, and books to school libraries and individual children in Appalachia. Teen volunteers from Emily's high school write letters to their Appalachian "Book Buddies," encouraging them to read and learn.

The best part for Emily? "The little things," she answers. "I've seen children who've never owned a book, visited a library, or been inside a fast-food restaurant. We're giving these kids tools to help create a better life for themselves – and the knowledge that someone cares for them."

"Just like my Grandma," she adds with a smile.

Emily was a National Honoree in The 1996 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. In 1999, "Grandma's Gifts" provided Christmas presents to more than 500 children.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

December 1 is World AIDS Day. 13-year-old **Jamie Morales** (Wichita, Kansas) lost her mother and two other close relatives to AIDS. She now speaks to other students and community groups about both preventing HIV and AIDS and its impact on children like her.

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month. 18-year-old **Joshua Hewitt** (Perry, New York) staged a simulated traffic accident in front of his high school to graphically demonstrate the horrors of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

December, 2000

Emily's Gifts Go Far

Subject Matter
Civics, creative writing, personal development, service learning

Materials
Paper, pencils, reproduced copies of a "Family Giving Tree," student journals, white board or butcher paper, markers

Preparation
Contact a neighborhood elementary school to get the names of students in a primary level class for the "Book Buddies" project in this unit.

Overview
After reading and discussing Emily Douglas' profile, students are asked to reflect on the gifts or legacies each member of their family has given them as they create a personal "Family Giving Tree." A journal entry lists the legacies each student would like to leave to his or her family, friends and the world around them. The class then selects a service project to provide material gifts to those in need. Reflection focuses on how the giving of a material gift also includes a non-material gift of self.

Day 1

Preparation
Create a "Family Giving Tree" by drawing a large tree, with large leaves. Make copies.

Class Activity
Read and discuss Emily's profile. What is a legacy? Are legacies always material items? Discuss. Ask students to reflect on the non-material gifts (or legacies) each has received from members (living or dead) of their family.

Assignment
Using the "Family Giving Tree" handout, ask each student to:

(1) Write on the leaves the names of family members, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and non-related close friends who are nonetheless considered to be in the family.

(2) Below each name, write a few short words or phrases that describe that individual's non-material gift or legacy to the student. Leave one leaf blank.

This assignment may take longer than one class period. If so, assign the completion of the "Family Giving Tree" as homework. Students may also decorate and individualize their trees using crayons, rubber stamps, stickers, or anything else they can think of.

Day 2

Class Activity
Collect the completed "Family Giving Trees" (to be displayed later on a bulletin board or door, as a wall border collage, or somewhere else in the classroom.) What non-material gift or legacy would the students like to leave to their families? Their friends? The world around them? Ask each student to write a short journal entry answering these questions.

Service Project

What about material gifts? Lead a class discussion about gifts that can be wrapped. Do you know anyone who will go without a gift for the holidays? How would it feel? As a class, identify one person, family or group in the community who may go without holiday gifts. Brainstorm how to help. Invite an expert (social worker, counselor) to help direct the class. Then, draw up an action plan and assign each student a task. Perhaps it's as easy as picking a name and buying a small gift. And, your project could be more complex – conducting a fund-raising campaign, taking donations. Whichever way the class decides to help, be sure to involve as many members of the school and community as possible.

Reflection Activity

Once the service project is complete, discuss as a class. How did it feel to give a gift to someone who would have gone without? Was it easy to do? Was it fun? What would you have done differently? In presenting a material gift, were the students leaving a non-material gift behind? Review the students' Family Giving Trees. How was the service project related? On the blank leaf, students write their names and the non-material gift or legacy they plan to leave the world.

Additional Ideas

(1) Volunteer for a few hours at a food kitchen, elementary school, or senior center.

(2) Interview relatives, close family friends, elected officials, or well-known community leaders about the non-material legacies they received from their families.

Also in December: December 7 is Pearl Harbor Day. Ask students to write letters of encouragement to military personnel as part of a history lesson.

January, 2001

"Anyone can be great...because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace – a soul generated by love."
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Brian's Rainbow

Dear Brian,
My best friend is black, and people sometimes give me a hard time...I love her like a sister, and when we are together it's like I'm not white and she isn't black. There are no colors. We're just people, friends having fun.

Sincerely,
Amanda

Amanda is just one of over 20,000 people who have written to Brian Harris and his international pen-pal service, "Friendship Sees No Color." Since 1992, Brian's club has matched people of different races together as pen-pals.

As a child of biracial parents, Brian knows what it's like to be caught in the middle of racial controversy. "It's almost like I'm an undercover racist detector."

Brian was 11 years old when race riots broke out in south-central Los Angeles. "We live a good thirty minutes away, but you could see the smoke from our house," he remembers. "Sometimes you imagine we've come a long way and that the races are coming together. The riots lit up the situation and showed the reality."

Brian brainstormed his pen-pal idea after seeing one too many television talk shows dealing with interracial issues. "Nobody was trying to show positive things about people of different races. How could people come together if they didn't know anything good about each other?"

Brian launched FSNC by mailing out press releases to newspapers and TV talk shows. As the letters poured in, Brian's entire family got involved in the matching process. "Interested pen-pals send an index card listing their name, address, age, sex and race, plus a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We try to match each person up with someone close to his or her own age. We've gotten letters from across the United States and all over the world."

Brian believes that the friendships he's helped establish provide the best proof of success. "It's really enlightening to hear all these stories," he says. "Attitudes really do change when people have a chance to actually communicate with someone of another race."

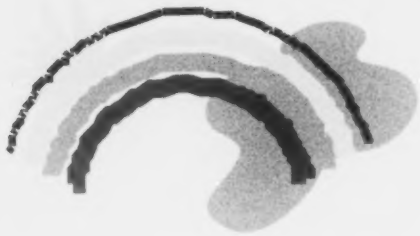
Brian Harris was a 1997 Prudential Spirit Of Community National Honoree. As a student at California's Stanford University, he's still in contact with his "Friendship Sees No Color" pen-pals. His younger siblings are currently working to launch a new "FSNC" pen-pal campaign.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

January is National Eye Care Month. 13-year old **Sara Cherry** (Albuquerque, New Mexico) wrote dozens of letters to civic groups and businesses asking people to donate their outdated eyeglasses. Sara's campaign now provides hundreds of eyeglasses to needy people in New Mexico and abroad.

Happy New Year! Start the year off right by starting a school service club. **Erik Reedy** (Topeka, Kansas) founded the Youth Action Coalition, a group of student volunteers from five area high schools who conduct various community service projects.

January, 2001



Brian's Rainbow

Subject Matter
Creative writing, civics, personal development, research, service learning, social studies

Materials
Newspapers, magazines, construction paper or poster board, pencils, markers, scissors, glue, tape, student journals, bulletin board with large rainbow (or other representation of harmonizing colors)

Overview
After reading Brian's profile, students search newspapers and magazines for examples of both racial harmony and bigotry. Class discussion revolves around current world problems caused by bigotry, and peaceful solutions. Students write poems, letters, journal entries and essays about friendship. The class then brainstorms, selects and implements a service project to promote racial harmony. The final activity in this unit is a journal writing exercise centered on each student's personal experience with people of other races and cultures. These may or may not be shared with the class.

Day 1

Class Activity
Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students, and make newspapers and magazines available. Half of the groups are to search for examples of local, national and world problems caused by racial bigotry and prejudice. The other groups are to find examples of racial harmony. Both groups should prepare short summaries of their findings to share with the class.

Assignment
Define the following words:

(1) bigotry
(2) prejudice

Ask parents or grandparents for examples of bigotry or prejudice they've experienced or witnessed in their lives. Bring these examples back to class to share in the following day's discussion.

Day 2

Class Activity
The student groups who searched for examples of racial bigotry and prejudice present their summary reports. Allow time after each presentation for discussion. How could this problem have been avoided? What caused it? What is the real problem? What can the world learn from these problems? Note any key words and phrases on the board and/or in student journals. As time and the discussion allow, integrate the previous day's homework into the lesson. How has bigotry and prejudice affected the lives of students' parents or grandparents?

Assignment
Define friendship. Ask parents or grandparents about their best friends and what friendship has meant to them. Bring these examples back to class to share in the following day's discussion.

Day 3

Class Activity
The student groups who searched for examples of problem solving through racial harmony present their findings. Allow time after each presentation for discussion. What information did the people in these examples bring to their problem that yesterday's individuals did not? What can the world learn from these problems? Record any key words or phrases on the board or in student journals. As time and discussion allow, include examples of adult friendships and racial harmony from the previous day's homework assignment. How has friendship and racial harmony affected the lives of students' parents or grandparents?

Assignment
Students are to write a short recipe for a best friend. The format can be anything they wish (letter, poem, list, etc.) These will be shared in the next day's class.

Day 4-5

Class Activity
Share and discuss the previous day's assignment. Encourage volunteers to share their recipes. Does friendship depend on a person's color or race? Why? Why not? What does it mean to say you're someone's friend? How can people work to become better friends?

January, 2001

Brian's Rainbow

Service Project

Read Brian Harris' profile. Brian was one person providing one solution. Are there other ways one person can promote racial harmony in his or her school, neighborhood, town, state, or nation? In the world?

Divide the class into two groups again, but this time mix up the groups so students work with different students than they did for the research project. Each group discusses possible ways to promote racial harmony. What about a pen pal group like Brian Harris did? Or, a school-wide conference on diversity? Each group brainstorms ideas and selects one. Then, the class comes together to make a final decision on the service project. Spokespeople from each group present their ideas. Once the decision is made, both groups are assigned various planning responsibilities. While the project is being implemented, students are to write regular updates in their journals describing how they feel.

Reflection Activity

Invite a person who attended the special event the class hosted, or who benefitted from the class service project, to speak to the class afterwards. Ask him or her to share feelings about the project. Allow time for questions and answers. Class discussion should center on whether the students feel they made a difference in the community. Did they accomplish what they set out to do?

Students then write a short journal entry or essay about friendship. Is friendship based on the color of a person's skin or the country they're from? How can they reach out to others and become better friends?

Additional Idea

Publish a "cookbook" filled with the recipes for friendship, and sell it, donating the proceeds toward a racial tolerance project.

Also in January: It's National Volunteer Blood Donor Month. As part of a health lesson, ask the class to organize a community blood drive with the local blood bank.

Catch the Spirit: What's Right For Me?

You may make an instant decision to volunteer in your community. But don't be hasty in selecting a project or organization. First and foremost, take time to learn about groups, ideas and causes that interest you.

Before choosing an activity, consider the following:

1) What community or neighborhood problems concern you?

2) Does volunteering for one of these groups fit your own interests?

There are many reasons to volunteer. But one should be universal – volunteer for something you can enjoy. As you search for the "right" volunteer activity, ask yourself:

1) How much time do I have to commit?

2) What talents or skills do I offer?

3) What do I want to get out of my involvement?

4) Will I enjoy this type of service?

Don't limit your thinking. You may prefer the more structured approach of a larger group or the "family" feeling of a smaller organization. Perhaps you want to create your own volunteer activity by engaging your friends or family, or maybe just work alone on a project. When you've selected or narrowed your volunteer interests, you may want to talk to your parents, friends, teacher or club sponsor, a counselor or someone at your church or synagogue. They might have suggestions on how to go about making it happen. Call organizations and local government offices that offer services to the public. Read your local newspaper. Watch and listen to the television and radio news for ideas.

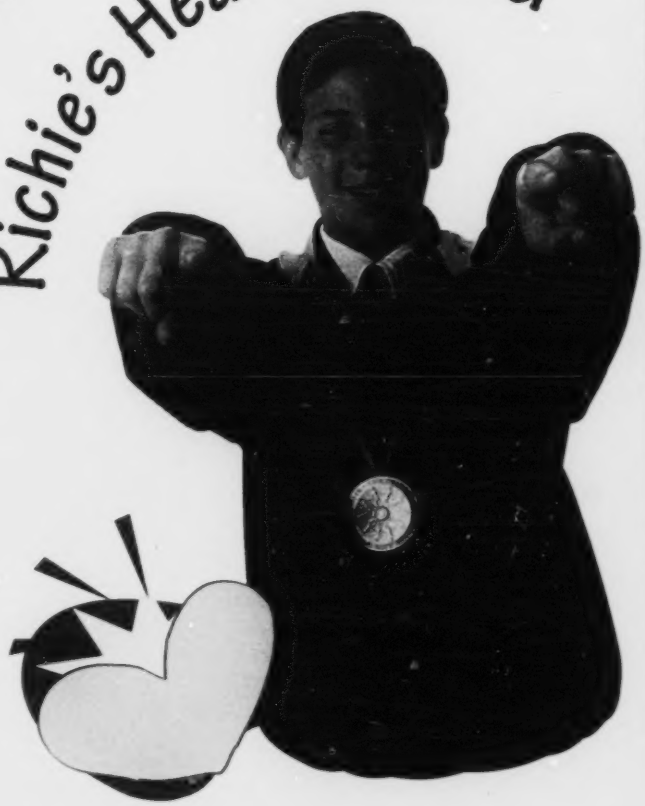
After you've made a choice, commit yourself to it. Give it your energy – and adequate time – to determine if it's a good fit.

An excerpt from "Catch the Spirit: A Student's Guide to Community Service," developed by Prudential in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education. Print the entire booklet from prudential.com/community/spirit/volunteer.

February, 2001

"If you think about what you ought to do for other people, your character will take care of itself."
President Woodrow Wilson

Richie's Heart of Gold



Richie Hiatt has been a Boy Scout since the age of six, so he knew he could organize a walk-a-thon against cancer for his Eagle Scout project. Scouts are always prepared, right?

"I thought I was," Richie recalled, "but then my seven-year-old sister Laci was diagnosed with leukemia. There's no way you can be prepared for that."

There were lots of other kids in the hospital's critical care unit with Laci, many whose families had little or no insurance. "I had to do something, even if it didn't directly help my sister," Richie stated. "You couldn't look at those kids and not do something."

It took several months of planning and hard work before Richie's "Walk On For A Cure For Cancer...Kids Helping Kids" walk-a-thon was ready. Richie made a lot of speeches. The toughest? "Talking in front of two hundred girls and their mothers at a charity luncheon," he grinned. "I was really nervous!"

On a clear, sunny day in March, with the "Rocky" movie theme blasting from a public address system, Laci and two other children with cancer led over two hundred participants around the track. "I'll never forget the smiles and tears of joy on everybody's faces when Laci and the other kids broke through the banner at the finish line," Richie said. "No question about it: all of us won that day."

Richie's walk-a-thon raised over $15,000 for the Parents Against Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides free transportation, check-ups, medical supplies and other necessities to needy cancer victims and their families.

Richie himself learned some lessons from his walk-a-thon experience. "First, I learned how easy it was to take the people you love for granted," he said. "I won't do that again."

Richie's second lesson? "If you really believe in yourself and your cause, others will, too."

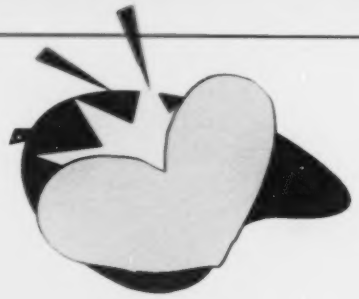
Richie Hiatt was a National Honoree in The 1998 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Currently a junior in high school, he continues his Scout involvement and commitment to community service. Younger sister Laci is nine years old, back in school, and in remission from leukemia.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

Cheryl Barbee (13, Boise, Idaho) created "Support Our Siblings," a group for children with chronically ill siblings. "SOS" members meet regularly to share their anxieties and needs with counselors and other children in similar circumstances.

February 11-17 is Child Passenger Safety Week. 18-year-old **Sara McDonnall** (Lamar, Colorado) wants kids to "Buckle Up With Bucklebear." Using a large bear puppet, coloring books and a lively, fun-filled program, she's educated more than 1000 preschool students about seat belt safety.

February, 2001



Richie's Heart of Gold

Subject Matter
Civics, creative writing, service learning

Materials
White board or butcher paper, markers, student journals

Overview
After reading and discussing Richie Hiatt's profile, students are asked to think of simple good deeds they could perform (1) around school, (2) in their neighborhood, (3) at a nearby elementary school or daycare center, or (4) at a nearby senior center. Each deed is assigned points on a 1-10 scale, from simplest to most difficult/time consuming. The list and point scale is copied and reproduced for each student. Student teams participate in a Good Deed scavenger hunt, earning points for each good deed performed in a given time period. Results are discussed in class. Students are asked to write about their good deeds, the reactions of recipients, and their own personal reactions to the activity.

Day 1

Class Activity
Read and discuss Richie Hiatt's profile. What was his motivation? What constitutes a good deed? Who needs good deeds to be done for them? Why? Ask students to brainstorm a list of simple good deeds they could perform and who they could help. Are there people at the school, in the neighborhood, at the senior center or hospital who need help? Assign point values to each deed based on a 1-10 scale. Teachers may choose to assign point values either during class discussion or by themselves after class.

Service Project

Make a copy of the student-generated good deeds list (and point values) for each student. Assign each student to a "Good Deed Team." Each student "Good Deed Team" is to complete as many listed good deeds as possible in the allotted time period (as determined by the teacher), obtaining initials from the deed's recipient upon completion. The scavenger hunt may take place over several days or weeks. Why not start two weeks before Valentine's Day, and complete the project on February 14?

Reflection Activity

Each student team is to report the results of their good deed scavenger hunt. Discuss. Students are then asked to write a journal entry describing their good deeds, the reactions of recipients, and their own personal reactions to the activity. Did their good deeds truly impact other people's lives? Did they feel good doing the deeds? Would they do it again?

Additional Idea

Sometimes, a good deed is just making someone smile. Have the class make Valentine's cards to deliver to sick children at the hospital.

Also in February: It's Canned Foods Month. As part of an economics lesson on poverty, ask students to collect canned goods to donate to the local food bank.

March, 2001

Pettus Leads By Example

"You have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose."
Dr. Seuss

Pettus Randall is only 17, but he's already providing powerful role models for thousands of young children across the United States. His reading assistance program, "Read & Lead," has linked over 20,000 elementary students with high school reading buddies.

"On the surface it helps kids learn to read," Pettus says, "but what it really does is give them a love of books by showing them that reading is fun, and not something you only do in school. The kids also learn from positive teen role models."

Pettus developed the "Read & Lead" concept as a service project for high school Key Clubs in his area. "Little kids look up to teenagers. They'll listen when a high school kid tells them something, because they want to be just like them."

"Read & Lead" volunteers sign up for an hour of after school time each week at a local elementary school. The elementary extended-day director or school principal links volunteers up with specific children. Each week, the child and his or her teen mentor check a book out from the school library. "Half the time they read, but sometimes they just talk and have fun," Pettus explains. "It's important to build a relationship that encourages learning but also gives kids a positive role model."

Pettus has taken his "Read & Lead" program across the United States and Canada via a web site (www.readandlead.com), mailing campaign, newsletter and dozens of speeches to Key Clubs, churches and other community groups.

In spite of the hours he spends promoting "Read & Lead," Pettus still makes time for his own reading buddy, 6-year-old Joseph. "Joseph's dad had to break off our session early one day because Joseph had a basketball game. The little guy started tearing up and made me promise to come back that week and read another book. I knew then that all of us who came back week after week weren't just going through the motions. We really were making a difference."

Pettus was a National Honoree in The 1999 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. He has continued to expand his "Read & Lead" program, both on a local and national level. Over 5,000 "Read & Lead" starter kits have been requested by schools and other community organizations across the United States and Canada. Request your kit at the Read & Lead website at www.readandlead.com.

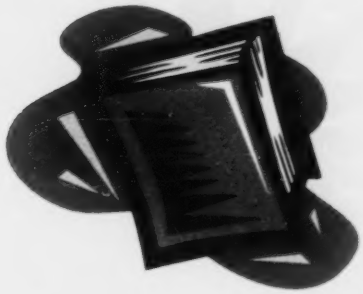
And The Spirit Is Catching...

March is Music in Our Schools Month. 13-year-old **Shannon Blevins** (Columbus, Mississippi) wanted to share the joys of singing and musical fellowship, so he created (and now directs) the popular youth "New Hope Gospel Choir." Shannon arranges most of the group's music, leads regular after-school rehearsals and conducts frequent performances at both school and community functions.

March 4-10 is National PTA Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week. **Jenny Hungerford** (18, Orfordville, Wisconsin) spent almost 3 years of her life hooked on drugs and running away from home. After her recovery, she wrote a skit based on her true-life experiences as a teen addict. Jenny has presented her motivational drug-prevention program to over 250 schools, community groups, treatment facilities, and youth conferences across Wisconsin.

March, 2001

Pettus Leads By Example



Subject Matter
Creative writing, civics, current events, personal development, research, service learning

Materials
Student journals, white board, markers, library and online research materials (optional materials: the "Read & Lead" how-to manual – available online at www.readandlead.com)

Overview
Using Pettus' profile (and web site) as a model, students are asked to write about a teenage (or adult) role model from their childhood. Discussion centers around their written essays plus ways in which they can be positive role models to young children in their neighborhoods. If a neighborhood reading buddy program is already in operation, students are urged to participate. If not, students discuss illiteracy in the United States and ways in which each student might become part of the solution. Then, an actual service project to promote literacy is implemented.

Day 1-2

Class Activity
Read Pettus Randall's profile to the class. Pettus chose to be a role model to young children to instill a love of reading. When you were young, did you have a role model? Students are asked to write a short essay about their childhood role models. How did they help? Briefly describe specific incidents. How did this role model make the (young) student feel? This essay may also be a homework assignment.

Ask volunteers to share their essays. Discuss. What are the characteristics of a positive role model? What does it mean to the child? To the role model? How can being a positive influence on a young child's life make a difference? Ask students to reflect (and perhaps write a further paragraph) on the positive influence they could have in a young person's life.

Service Project

If a "Read & Lead" or reading buddy program is already in operation within the district, students are urged to participate. If not, students are asked to research (using the library and Internet resources) illiteracy in the United States. What causes illiteracy? What do the statistics relate about the number of illiterate teens and adults? What are some solutions/programs already being applied to the problem?

What can each individual student do to help wipe out illiteracy? As a class, share ideas for service projects to promote literacy among young children. How can the students help influence children to read? Starting a book buddy program? Maybe. Or, a reading hour at the local library. Decide on one project, and implement as a class. Make sure each student has some interaction with a young child. Be sensitive to students who may have their own problems with reading, or reading aloud.

Reflection Activity

Once the service project is complete, ask the young children who benefitted to send notes or to speak to the class about what it meant to them. Do they have a different attitude about reading? Did they look up to older students? Students share their feelings about the project as a class, and in their journals.

Additional Idea

Make a short video of local celebrities (teachers, doctors, coaches, athletes) talking about their favorite childhood books. Host a special assembly to share the video with young children.

Also in March: It's Mental Retardation Awareness Month. Invite a local Special Olympian to speak to the class as part of a lesson on diversity. Offer extra credit to those students who volunteer with Special Olympics.

April, 2001

"We must want for others, not for ourselves alone."

Eleanor Roosevelt

Amber's Earthly Mission

Amber Novotny's mission has a countdown. "If we don't do something now to help the earth renew and replenish its resources, we aren't going to have anything left for those who follow us. We have to recycle, and we have to do it now."

Amber started collecting newspapers in her garage for a Future Homemakers of America Peer Education project. "My town, like many other rural South Dakota communities, was struggling to comply with the new environmental laws and yet remain within its limited financial resources. I thought I could help."

Soon the family cars were parked out on the street. "The garage was stacked with paper from floor to ceiling," Amber remembers. "My dad was really good about it, but I could tell he wanted his garage back."

Amber requested help from the Rosholt Town Council, who was so impressed with the teen's knowledge and enthusiasm that it put her in charge of Rosholt's recycling program. A vacant city building was provided. Amber made flyers announcing the hours of the new center and listing acceptable items, then wrote articles about recycling for the local newspaper.

The response? "Overwhelming. We collected thousands of glass and plastic bottles, jars and tin cans, plus tons of newspaper, magazines and office paper. People brought bags of recyclables, met their friends and stayed to socialize. It really pulled our town together."

In the process of educating both her town and herself about recycling, Amber's also learned another valuable lesson. As she says, "Sometimes you have to do things no one else wants to do, or take a stand on an issue when other people hesitate. If you see a need, you can't wait. You have to get on it by yourself. The clock's ticking on the earth. It's going to take everyone's help to stop the countdown."

Amber Novotny was a National Honoree in The 1997 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Her community activism continues at Concordia College, where she majors in environmental studies, works at the school radio station and volunteers for a variety of school and community projects.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

April 22-28 is Reading is Fun Week. When 18-year-old **Dev SenGupta** (Kent, Washington) learned that most homeless children have no special books and toys to call their own, he organized a collection drive at 19 Seattle-area schools. Over 5,000 donated items were distributed to needy kids through shelters and social service agencies.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. 15-year-old **Brandy Hoskins** (New Albany, Indiana) started a fund-raising "Penny War" between classes at her school, sold awareness ribbons for child abuse prevention, wrote a booklet about preventing child abuse, and coordinated school assemblies on child abuse awareness and prevention.

April, 2001

Amber's Earthly Mission

Subject Matter
Civics, creative writing, environmental studies, personal development, research, science, service learning

Materials
Clear plastic sheet-cake container, water, clean sand, cat litter or aquarium rocks to cover the bottom of the container to a thickness of approximately 1/2 inch, a plastic ring holder from a six-pack of soda, a small portion of leftover food (possibly an uneaten piece of cookie or sandwich from the cafeteria), paper and pencils for each student, access to the library or Internet for research, local newspapers and magazines.

Overview
After observing a brief classroom experiment, students research different forms of recycling. Research findings are shared in class. Students are then asked to design and implement a recycling project. The final activity of this unit is a short journal entry explaining the importance of recycling to the earth's future and listing the new recycling habits that each student will try to adopt into his or her daily life.

Day 1

Preparation
Place the sheet-cake container, water and rocks or sand on a table in front of the class. The plastic six-pack ring-holder and leftover food item should be readily available.

Class Activity
Tell the class that the empty plastic container represents a nearby lake, river or body of water. Cover the bottom of the container with the clean gravel or sand. Add the clean water to the container, pouring slowly to avoid stirring up the bottom. Allow the sand/rocks and water to settle while explaining to the class that a clean environment takes conscious effort and work on everyone's part. For example, what would happen to the lake if someone dropped this (add the six-pack ring-holder and the leftover food to the container)? Does it have an effect? Watch and see.

Lead the class in a discussion summarizing what they already know about recycling from watching the news or other reading. Stop occasionally to observe the container. Within a short time (a few minutes at best) the water will turn cloudy/dirty. Discuss the effects of pollution on the students' daily lives.

Day 2

Class Activity
Read and discuss Amber's profile. Why did she conduct a recycling project? How did she succeed?

Assignment
Using newspapers, the library and/or Internet access, each student is to research one type of recycling. Search locally to identify what your town or school is doing to recycle. Findings are to be reported back to the class in oral or written form within a few days.

Service Project

Students share their research findings. Is there a need for a recycling project in your community? Be creative. If your community has an extensive paper, glass and aluminum recycling project, discuss other needs. What about batteries, phone books, Christmas trees or old clothes? Brainstorm ideas, then choose a project to pursue. Ask experts to address the class while the project is in the planning stages. Assign each student or groups of students a task. Students keep regular records of the project status in their journals. Conduct the project, and be sure to spread the news. Invite the local press to be there when your project kicks off.

Reflection Activity

Students share the project's successes and failures. Did it work? Have they made an impression on other members of the community about the importance of recycling? Students write a journal entry about the new recycling habits they intend to adopt as a result.

Additional Idea

Recycling isn't just about properly disposing of unused items. You can also recycle items by redirecting them to people in need. What about old suitcases? Don't throw them out. Give them to foster children like Aubyn Burnside did. Start a chapter of Suitcases for Kids. Check out Aubyn's story in the month of June.

Also in April: It's Mathematics Education Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month. As part of a math lesson, host a loose change drive to purchase needed items for the local home for abused children.

May, 2001

"Resolve to create a good future. It's where you'll spend the rest of your life."

Charles Franklin Kettering

Lauren's Ageless Friendships

Lauren Garsten has dedicated her young life to the construction of bridges – not the huge spans of concrete and steel crossing rivers and oceans, but bridges of communication and love linking people at different stages of life. "I guess you'd have to call them human bridges," she laughs. "Sometimes it involves tearing down a few walls, but that's the easy part."

Lauren first thought of building her human bridges while volunteering at a home for neglected and abused children. "I couldn't stop thinking about the kids. The staff obviously cared, but it was impossible for all the children to get the special, concentrated attention they needed."

"Then I saw a television news story about the growing elderly population and their search for activities to help them remain productive members of society. The connection clicked."

Lauren decided to somehow link seniors with neglected children through high school volunteers to help bridge the age gap. "The problem was figuring out how to accomplish this," she remembers. "That took lots of research, phone calls and hard work."

The result? "Trios," a monthly Saturday program. Staff members at both a local retirement center and a home for neglected and abused children select groups of six different individuals each month. The six seniors join six children and six high school volunteers on short field trips, including picnics, bowling, zoos, museums, movies and sports events. A small grant provides ticket money, food and the salary of a child care worker accompanying the group.

The results? "You'd be amazed. It only takes a few minutes before the kids realize that both the seniors and their high school buddies are genuinely interested in them – usually something they've never experienced before. "Everybody gets something out of this. As the walls dividing people crumble and fall, these wonderful human bridges rise in their place. Is it worth it? Absolutely."

Lauren Garsten was a National Honoree in The 1996 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Lauren earned a Bachelor's degree from Harvard University in the spring of 2000, and now directs "Project Health," a non-profit community organization providing basic health services to underprivileged children living in Boston, Massachusetts.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. 12-year-old **Max Penning** (Barrington, Illinois) and his band of volunteers bought new sports equipment for inner city children attending Holy Family Lutheran School by selling over 2,000 pizzas.

May is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month. 17-year-old **Adrien Lopez** (Valdez, Alaska) created and coordinated a series of four open forums called "Teens Against Pregnancy." The forums featured real-life stories from young mothers and were designed to educate young girls about the realities and challenges of becoming a teen mother.

May, 2001

Lauren's Ageless Friendships

Subject Matter
Civics, creative writing, research, service learning, social studies

Materials
Access to research materials, student journals, pencils, local telephone directories

Overview
After reading and discussing Lauren's profile, students investigate the current status, problems and needs of senior citizens. Guest speakers are invited to speak to the class, or students may be sent to interview an expert and report back. Students are then asked to implement a service project to benefit senior citizens. A final in-class assignment is to write a short essay describing what students hope their lives will be like when they are senior citizens.

Day 1

Class Activity
Read and discuss Lauren Garsten's profile. Do any students have close relationships with seniors citizens? What are some of the positive and negative aspects of their lives? What's the hardest part of being a senior? Discuss.

Assignment
Ask students to choose their assignment from the following:
(1) Interview a senior citizen, asking the same questions as noted in the activity above. Report findings back to the class.
(2) Using the library and/or Internet resources, investigate the problems and needs of senior citizens. Report findings back to the class.
These will probably take several days to complete.

Day 2-5

Class Activity
Invite a senior or an expert on seniors' issues (examples: a senior center activities coordinator, social services worker, geriatrics doctor or nurse) to speak to the class. Ask students to take notes during the speaker's presentation. Allow time for questions and discussion if possible. If an expert cannot attend class, send a small group of students to interview this person and then report back to class. If possible, record the interview.

Service Project

Based on the expert's visit, and previous assignments, initiate a discussion about the needs of your community's senior citizens. Are there seniors who are too frail to do small household tasks? Or, maybe basic needs are met, but seniors are feeling lonely and removed from society. How can you help? Brainstorm service project ideas, and select one. Write an action plan, and run it by your senior care expert for help. Enlist the support of the school and local senior center. Implement your project, making sure every student has an active role.

Reflection Activity

Invite a group of seniors who benefitted from the class project to join your students for lunch. Allow students and seniors the opportunity to mingle, sharing highlights of the project. Then, invite the seniors to share their feelings with the whole group, and students to do the same. Did their participation in the project change the students' perceptions of the elderly? Students write a journal entry detailing these feelings, and what they hope their lives will be like as seniors.

Also in May: It's National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month. As part of a family life lesson, ask students to host a baby shower and donate the gifts to a local women's shelter.

June, 2001

"I am only one, but still, I am one. I cannot do everything but I can do something. And, because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do what I can."
Helen Keller

Aubyn Packs A Little Love

10-year-old Aubyn Burnside was outraged when she learned that foster children almost never have a suitcase for their clothes and personal property. Most children move several times while in foster care, usually throwing their belongings in plastic trash bags. "Most adults don't even think about what these kids have to put their stuff in," Aubyn said. "They must feel like garbage themselves."

Aubyn decided to somehow find a used suitcase for each of the over 300 foster children in Catawba County, North Carolina. She asked her family, neighbors, church members, Scouts and 4-H group for help, but collections were slow at first.

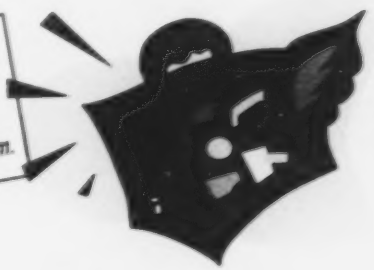
Aubyn and her mother Linda spent an afternoon checking thrift stores, buying every suitcase they could find. Turned out they didn't need them. "We laugh about that now," Aubyn smiles. "Within a few weeks we had suitcases all over the house. We'd come home and there'd be 40 or 50 on the front porch. It was amazing."

Now, "Suitcases for Kids" has gone nationwide. Aubyn and her mother hit the road at least once a week, speaking at churches, schools and local community groups. Each time they leave behind a starter kit so other kids can get involved – and a message of hope. "You have to listen to other people to find out what they need," Aubyn says. "Age is no limit. Kids can do whatever they set their mind on doing. And one kid can make a difference."

"It's really hard to ask for money, but an old suitcase? That's easy. There's a lot of children out there who need help. 'Suitcases for Kids' spreads the word – kind-hearted people do the rest."

Aubyn Burnside was a National Honoree in The 1998 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. As a result of her enthusiastic leadership, "Suitcases for Kids" has grown from a local drive to an international nonprofit organization with chapters in all 50 states as well as many foreign countries. In addition, Aubyn now lobbies for funding of mental health services for children in protective care.

For a Suitcases for Kids start-up kit, contact Aubyn at SuitcasesForKids@aol.com.

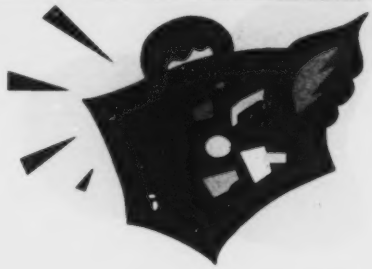


And The Spirit Is Catching...

June 1 is Stand for Children Day – 12-year-old **Katie Eller** (Tulsa, Oklahoma) knew kids at the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless needed cribs, toys and playground equipment, so she decided to open a few 'lemon-aid' stands – actually over 200 of them – on street corners all over town. Donated supplies, hundreds of teen volunteers and a blaze of free newspaper and television coverage helped "Lemon-Aid" earn over $27,000 its first two summers of operation.

June 21st is the first day of Summer. 17-year-old **Erin Carney** (Baltimore, Maryland) spends her summers as a student volunteer in the Child Life Department at Johns Hopkins Children's Hospital. Her duties include comforting young patients, playing games, reading stories, and sometimes just holding hands with a sick child.

June, 2001



Aubyn Packs A Little Love

Subject Matter
Civics, creative writing, research, service learning, social studies

Materials
White board or butcher paper, markers, writing paper (several sheets for each student), pencils, local telephone directory (more than one if possible)

Overview
Students are asked to record first-response nouns, adjectives and action verbs as they respond to a series of focus questions. From those lists, each student writes a diary entry from the perspective of a child leaving home for foster care. Further activities include sharing diary entries, brainstorming a wall chart list of practical items a foster child might need, and implementing a service project to benefit foster children.

Day 1

Class Activity
Read Aubyn's profile to the class. Ask students to record the first 2 or 3 nouns, adjectives and/or action verbs they think of after hearing the following questions. Allow approximately one minute between questions for response time.

(1) You have less than 5 minutes to select 3 things from your room before you're taken to a foster home. List the three items.

(2) Mary Smith (age 12) and her brother John (age 10) are spending their first night in foster care. They don't know how long they're going to be there, what's going to happen the next day, where they'll go to school or what the future holds. How do you think they feel? Use adjectives, action verbs and short descriptive phrases to describe Mary and John's feelings.

(3) What would you say to a new foster child if you were the adult in charge of the foster home? What if you were another child staying in that home? Record your responses.

Assignment
Students are to write a one-page journal entry from the perspective of a child entering foster care for the first time. Use the brainstormed responses to the 3 questions above as key points. If done in class, this probably would be a second day activity.

Day 2

Class Activity
Ask a few volunteers to read their journal entries to the class. Allow time for response to each entry, recording key adjectives and phrases on the white board (or butcher paper). Discuss the variety of emotional and practical responses to the fictional situation. Collect and store these papers for a future wrap-up activity. Why did Aubyn choose to collect suitcases? Discuss the practical and emotional reasons behind her choice. Ask students if there's some other item they think would be more important. Why? Discuss. Brainstorm the kinds of practical things a new foster child would need (i.e. clothing, personal hygiene items, school supplies, etc.) Make a list on butcher paper or white board.

Service Project

On the white board (or butcher paper), write: "Making a Plan – Can I Help?" Class discussion should center on making a list of practical steps for a clothing, suitcase or other collection drive. Look in the telephone directory for government or private agencies involved in caring for homeless or foster children. Remember that one of the first steps in this project should be contacting the county foster care system director or appropriate social services agency in your area. First, ask if there's a need for whatever items the class is interested in collecting. Second, ask for helpful advice! Then write an action plan, and assign each person a task. Students write regular status reports in their journals. Finally, implement the project.

Reflection Activity

Students write a fictional first person essay as though they were a child who benefitted from the service project. This should take the form of a thank-you letter to the students. Read aloud, and discuss.

Additional Ideas

(1) Have a student committee write an article for the school or community newspaper outlining the needs of foster children in the area and ways individuals can help.

(2) Contact Aubyn for a start-up kit and start a local chapter of Suitcases for Kids. Reach her at SuitcasesForKids@aol.com.

Also in June: It's World Juggling Day on June 20. As part of a physical education lesson, invite a professional juggler to teach the class to juggle. Then, host a juggling show for the local nursing home.

July, 2001

Kristen's Champions

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

Anonymous

"Go, Kristen," yelled a young girl in the stands. "Go!"

Kristen slid around the third base curve, aiming for home plate and another run for the team. "In the background I caught a glimpse of my number one fan, Taylor, her tiny body lost amidst the shiny metal and chrome of her wheelchair. Taylor has cerebral palsy, is vision impaired, and will never use her legs to run around a baseball diamond," Kristen says.

Because Kristen knew that her friend Taylor needed a chance to hear somebody yell "Go Taylor" as she scored her own home run, Kristen created "Anyone Can Softball." "I wanted Taylor and all the other children and young adults like her to have their chance."

Kristen's mom (a pediatric physical therapist) helped her write a workable plan for "Anyone Can Softball," and gave her a list of people she should contact. The local softball commissioner agreed to help adapt a ballpark for wheelchair accessibility. Then she started calling schools, day care centers, children's clinics, Easter Seals, the United Way, and every other organization who helps physically-challenged individuals.

"Anyone Can Softball" is really a simple idea. They play a modified tee-ball game, using the same position assignments and basic rules as everyone else. Every physically-challenged player is assigned an assistant or buddy. "Buddies" are there to help every member of the team attain the same level of play. They push wheelchairs, pick up balls, help shaky arms swing a bat, steady catcher's mitts, and (most important of all) cheer their buddy on.

After spending the winter making phone calls, writing letters, conducting surveys and distributing information, Kristen set the schedule and the league began playing ball. Seventy physically-challenged players hit the field that first season, plus dozens of buddies and even more eager parents cheering from the stands. They played their championship game at the National Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

"My best memory? Easy. That was when I stood up and yelled, 'Go Taylor, Go!' as a little girl in a shiny chrome wheelchair passed third on her way home."

Kristen Deaton was a National Honoree in The 1997 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Currently, Kristen is a junior at the University of Oklahoma, where she studies communication disorders (specializing in pediatric audiology), works with a church youth group, volunteers for Special Olympics, and continues spreading the word about the "Anyone Can Softball" program. New chapters of "Anyone Can Softball" are spreading across the United States. A National Invitational "Anyone Can Softball" Tournament is planned for the fall of 2000.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

July is National Anti-Boredom Month. 18-year-old **Angela Lind** (Flandreau, South Dakota) wanted young children to reach for a good book instead of turning on their television sets. She started a summer reading hour and sign language lessons for elementary-age children at her local library, developing games and other fun activities around the themes of the stories she chose.

July 4th is Independence Day. 18-year-old **Tyler Mann** created an ongoing voter registration program at his high school (Roswell, Georgia). Through regular voter registration drives and personalized birthday letters sent to all students reaching their 18th birthday, Tyler hopes to convince every eligible student that the price of our nation's independence includes the responsibility of voting.

July, 2001

Kristen's Champions

Subject Matter
Adaptive physical education, civics, creative writing, service learning

Materials
A borrowed wheelchair, walker or pair of crutches, student journals, library or Internet access

Preparation
Arrange for a special education teacher, physical therapist or physically-challenged adult to speak to the class about the difficulties of being physically handicapped.

Overview
After presenting a short skit in which you (the teacher) or a student demonstrates the difficulties of being handicapped, students are asked to write a short journal entry describing the experience, any family members or friends who are physically challenged, and how they themselves might feel if they were handicapped. Kristen Deaton's profile is read and discussed. Students are sent into the community to survey public buildings and facilities for wheelchair-accessibility, while additional students use the library or Internet to research adapting buildings for the handicapped. Students select and implement individual service projects to benefit the physically-challenged.

Day 1

Preparation
Borrow a wheelchair, walker or pair of crutches. Prepare a short skit demonstrating the difficulties of being handicapped in a classroom, to be performed by you (the teacher) or a student. Include activities such as maneuvering among the desks, picking up a fallen book or paper, or writing on the white board.

Activities
Do not explain the wheelchair, walker or crutches to the class prior to beginning the class. After you (or the student actor) present the skit, ask students to write a short journal entry describing the daily difficulties encountered by the handicapped, any family members or friends who are physically challenged, and how they themselves might feel if they were handicapped. Discuss. Read Kristen Deaton's profile and discuss her "Anyone Can Softball" program. Is there a need for a similar program in your community? What recreational activities are already in place for physically challenged individuals? Discuss.

Assignment
Divide the class into two groups. One group surveys local public buildings observing any adaptations for the physically challenged. Report these findings back to the class. The other group researches methods of improving access to homes, businesses and public facilities for the physically handicapped. Report these findings back to the class.

Day 2

Class Activity
Students are to present the results of the previous day's assignment. A special education teacher, physical therapist or physically challenged adult speaks to the class about the realities of physical disabilities.

Service Project

Discuss the many ways an individual might assist someone with physical or mental disabilities. One way is to develop a recreation program like Kristen did. Another way is to volunteer with the Special Olympics. Or, if the students' surveys found buildings in need of adaptability, students can start a letter-writing campaign to local officials. Each student is to select one project, and implement it over the course of time you determine.

Reflection Activity

Once each student's project is complete, they prepare an oral report detailing what they did. If students have pictures or other materials, they should share them. Finally, students write a journal entry explaining how they felt about doing the project. What did they learn?

Additional Ideas

(1) Arrange a special "Sports Day" for physically-challenged class children from a local elementary school. Ask members of your school's sports' teams to volunteer their time and assistance.

(2) Contact the local baseball commissioner and ask about starting an "Anyone Can Softball" program. Send for an "Anyone Can Softball" how-to kit by sending Kristen an e-mail at KristenTU@aol.com.

Also in July: It's National Ice Cream Month. Invite an expert in to teach students how to make ice cream as part of a home economics or science class. Then, throw an ice cream social for underprivileged kids.

August, 2001

Jason's Community Challenge

"Some men see things as they are and ask, 'why?' I dream things that never were and ask, 'why not?'"

Robert F. Kennedy
(paraphrased from G.B.Shaw)

11-year-old Jason Jones was a bright, athletic "latch key kid." He spent most of his free time hanging out with friends in a dreary, trash and weed-filled lot next to his mobile home park in Columbus, Georgia.

With nothing to do and no adult supervision, Jason might have chosen to follow others from his neighborhood down a path towards drugs and gangs. He didn't.

"My mother always told me that if I'm going to respect myself, I have to learn positive ways of dealing with the challenges around me, no matter what they are."

Jason organized his friends into a group he called the "Neighborhood Advisory Committee." Their first project? "We wanted a clean, safe place for kids to play." Using donations and a lot of "kid-power hours," the group cleaned up trash, painted over graffiti, picked weeds and planted flowers. Jason then convinced the park manager to sponsor a monthly clean-up day and "Litter Free" campaign.

The neighborhood clean-up was a great success. Jason and his committee went on to sponsor food and clothing drives, tutoring and child care for the park's younger children, and monthly neighborhood pot luck dinners.

"I believe that all of us have a responsibility to try as hard as we can to change things that are wrong."

Jason was a National Honoree in The 1998 Prudential Spirit Community Awards. He's expanded his community activism by volunteering to lead a Cub Scout troop and mentoring 6th graders at a neighborhood elementary school.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

August is Children's Vision and Learning Month. 13-year-old **Michelle Blanc** (Redwood Valley, California) takes guide-dog puppies into her home, monitoring each dog's development, teaching basic obedience commands, and providing the love each dog needs to learn how to be a caring, helpful companion for the blind.

August 1-7 is International Clown Week. 16-year-old **Aaron Romero** (Honolulu, Hawaii) pulls on the baggy pants and yarn wig of "Sunshine" the clown to perform a popular magic show and clown act at hospitals, homeless shelters, senior centers and fundraising events for the families of critically-ill children.

August, 2001

Jason's Community Challenge

Subject Matter
Civics, creative writing, personal development, problem solving, research, service learning

Materials
Paper, pencils, white board or butcher paper, markers, recent issues of local newspapers and/or national news magazines, telephone directories, library and Web access

Overview
After reading Jason Jones' profile, students are asked to write a paragraph about what they would most like to change in their neighborhood, town, state, world. Students are then asked to search recent issues of newspapers and news magazines for articles about local, state and national environmental concerns. Guided discussions and further research help each student to narrow his or her interest down to one area of concern. Students will then brainstorm a list of possible solutions and actually implement a service project to address their concerns.

Day 1

Class Activity
Read Jason Jones' profile to the class. What did Jason want to change in his neighborhood? Why? How would it benefit him? How would it benefit those around him? Was this a difficult task for a 13-year-old? Why or why not? What obstacles did he face? How did he overcome them?

Assignment
Ask each student to either make two lists or write two short paragraphs in their journals answering the following questions:

(1) What's 'right' about my neighborhood? Why is it a good place to live?
(2) What's 'wrong' with my neighborhood? What would I like to change and why?

Ask each student to bring current issues of local, state or national newspapers and news magazines to class the next day.

Day 2

Preparation
Scissors, pencils and paper are placed around the room. On white board or a large piece of butcher paper, prepare two columns headed "Right" and "Wrong."

Class Activity
Ask students to share their lists with the class. List students' "rights" and "wrongs" on white board or butcher paper. Allow a short discussion period after each student reads his or her assignment. Try to limit this discussion to what specifically is right and wrong, avoiding blame.

Assignment
Divide the class into groups of 2-3 students. Assign each group to a specific area of concern from the following list:

(1) local community problems
(2) regional problems
(3) problems affecting the state in which you live
(4) problems affecting the nation as a whole
(5) problems affecting the entire planet

Each group is to clip articles from their news sources about the assigned topic. For each clipped article, they are to prepare a short summary sentence defining the problem and a second sentence describing what's being done to fix the problem. The last sentence should include the names of the specific individuals or groups working to solve the problem.

This activity may also be an individual 2-5 day homework assignment. If so, the student response would be clipped copies of articles attached to a sheet of paper that includes their summary sentences and list of solutions.

Day 3

Class Activity
Each student group or individual presents media-search findings. Start with the global concerns. Keep a running list on the board (or butcher paper) during the presentations, indicating the problem, solution and who's in charge of change. Move from the global to state, regional and local community concerns, keeping a list and pointing out the similarities of each problem across the different levels. Is the world having the same problems as the town you live in, just on a larger scale? Are people applying similar solutions to both large (global, national or state) and small (local) areas of concern? Who's working on each problem at each level?

August, 2001

Jason's Community Challenge

Assignment

Ask each student to narrow his or her interest down to one area of local concern. For example, Jason Jones first tried to clean up his neighborhood and provide a safe, attractive place for kids to play. Brainstorm a list of possible solutions to these problems.

Service Project

Discuss each student's list of solutions. Allow the class time to contribute other ideas. As a class, select an actual service project based on the solutions the students created. If the problem identified is neighborhood graffiti, then maybe your service project is a "Graffiti Out" day, for which your class can recruit other students, parents, and community members to help paint over graffiti. Draw up an Action Plan, and seek administrative support.

Divide the class into groups, and assign each group a project. One group should handle recruitment (send invitations to community members, make announcements at school.) Another group handles planning (ask experts to assist, seek permits if necessary, secure dates and materials.) Finally, another group can handle publicity (prepare written materials, design and post flyers, call local press.)

Groups meet to begin project implementation. Start this process during class time. Then, groups can meet separately to make arrangements, share status with the class over a period of days or weeks to be determined by the teacher.

Reflection Activity

Once the service project has been implemented, initiate a class discussion about successes, failures and lessons learned. Students write a journal entry detailing their personal growth from start to finish. Did they solve the problem?

Additional Ideas

(1) Assign a research paper about a community concern on the local, regional, state, national or global level. Include an oral presentation.

(2) Engage the class in conducting a survey of the school or community to determine what problems others feel are present. Discuss survey results, and present them to a school board or town council meeting.

Also in August: It's National Parks Month. Include a class clean-up of the local park as part of a science lesson on the ecosystem and the effects of pollution.

Keep the Spirit Going! Some ideas to end the year:

If you elect to conduct a lesson plan each month, we encourage you to spend some time toward the end of the year to review what your students have learned. Here are some fun ways you can wrap-up the year and continue to encourage your students to volunteer in their communities.

- A few weeks before the end of the school year, ask each student to write a letter to themselves. In this letter, to be opened five years from now, students should talk about what they've learned about themselves during the past nine months; (b) what they've learned about helping others; and (c) the kind of person they hope to be as an adult. Read each letter, grade it on a separate sheet of paper. Write a short note of encouragement and return both the student's letter and your own note in a sealed envelope marked "To be opened on my _____ birthday."

- Ask students to write individual life plans to prepare for the next five years. What's important? What isn't? What did they learn from a year of community activism? How can they make a difference in their community, or in their own lives? What changes can they make and how can they accomplish their goals?

- Using the students' journals plus the quotes sprinkled throughout the calendar and any other available resources, ask students to review their journal entries and make a list of the 5-10 most important character traits for a fulfilled, happy life. Discuss these lists in class, keeping track of each characteristic (and the number of students who listed it as important) on the white board or butcher paper. Ask each student to rank the class list in the order of each characteristic's importance to them, then write a concluding journal entry entitled, "And Now I Begin..." detailing how they hope to incorporate these qualities in the future.

- Ask students to write a letter to the students who will sit at their desks next year, detailing their class experiences, how it changed their lives, and any advice they might want to share. Read these letters out loud to the class, eliminating the name of the sender. Ask each student to keep a list of the best advice they hear in their journals. Discuss and share these lists.

- Encourage students to select a volunteer service activity to conduct over their summer break. Remind students if they have conducted, or will be conducting a service activity over the summer, that they can apply for The 2002 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards in October of 2001.

Complete and return this form right away so we can send you materials for The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards before the October 31 deadline.

Please send me more details about:

__ The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards
__ The Prudential Youth Leadership Institute
__ Catch the Spirit: A Student's Guide to Community Service

Name: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

_____

e-mail: _____

phone: _____

fax: _____

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The Prudential
Spirit of Community Initiative
751 Broad Street, 16th Floor
Newark, NJ 07102

Additional Resources

Calendar Resources

Health Awareness Events
National Health Observances
National Health Information Center, Department of Health and Human Services
http://nhicnt.health.org/Pubs/2000healthobserv/nho.htm

The Health Pages
www.the-health-pages.com

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency
www.ncadd.org/2000calendar

Holidays and Special Observances
Holidays on the Net
www.holidays.net

The Earth Calendar
www.earthcalendar.net

Connect for Kids Calendar
www.connectforkids.org/calendar

The Worldwide Holiday and Festival Site
www.HolidayFestival.com

Education Events
Education World Events Calendar
www.education-world.com/calendar

Events for Libraries and Literacy
American Library Association
www.ala.org

Education Calendar
http://home.earthlink.net/~mediadesigns/Calendar.html

Special Awareness Events
Crime Prevention Events Calendar
National Crime Prevention Council
www.ncpc.org

Diversity Events
U.S. Department of the Interior
www.doi.gov/diversity

Anti-Poverty Events
National Coalition for the Homeless
http://nch.ari.net/confer.htm.#hunger

Service Learning Resources

Center for Civic Education
www.civiced.org

Character Counts
www.charactercounts.org

Learn and Serve America Exchange
www.lsaexchange.org

Learn and Serve America
Corporation for National Service
www.cns.gov/learn

National Service Learning Clearinghouse
http://nicsl.jaws.umn.edu

National Youth Leadership Council
www.nylc.org

Points of Light Foundation
www.pointsoflight.org

Volunteerism and Community Service Resources

America's Promise - The Alliance for Youth
www.americaspromise.org

AmeriCorps
www.cns.gov/americorps

Corporation for National Service
www.cns.gov

Do Something!
www.dosomething.org

AOL Foundation
www.helping.org

Impact Online
www.impactonline.org

Independent Sector
www.indepsec.org

National Council of Volunteer Centers
800-VOLUNTEER

Points of Light Foundation
www.pointsoflight.org

ServeNet
www.servenet.org

United Way
www.unitedway.org

VolunteerMatch
www.volunteermatch.org

Famous Quotes

Quote Library
Josephson Institute of Ethics
www.josephsoninstitute.org/quotes

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CATCH THE SPIRIT!

A calendar of timely tips for young volunteers and real-life service projects that you can do throughout the year, from September 2000 to August 2001.

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Brought to you by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards and America's top youth volunteers.

SEPTEMBER 2000

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."
Aesop

Gabriella Combats Violence

"Seems like there was always something going on across the street at the high school – sirens, police cars, flashing lights, gangs, drugs, even kids smoking and drinking right outside the fence of our school and then throwing their trash on our playground. It wasn't right," says Gabriella Contreras, of Tucson, Arizona, then nine years old. "My friends and I were going to be students at that high school in a few years, but none of us wanted to attend a school that wasn't safe. I knew that somebody had to do something that would promote peace and end all the violence and hatred." That "somebody" was Gabriella.

Gabriella wanted to spread a message of peace. She gathered a small group of friends who got to work one afternoon making signs saying "Stop the Violence," "We Want Peace," and "Say No To Drugs." The next morning they held the first peace march ever seen in front of Roskruge School. The response? Great!

"I decided to hold weekly meetings during lunch to talk about projects that would promote peace and help kids use their time and energy in positive ways. Sometimes people made fun of us, but I didn't care." Club B.A.D.D.D. (that means "Be Alert Don't Do Drugs") was there to do good.

That was five years ago. Since then, Club B.A.D.D.D. has organized an amazing number of community service projects, including food and clothing drives, school cleanups, annual 'peace' marches, an anti-drug art gallery, recycling campaigns and a citywide youth volunteer summit. They've held bake sales, auctions and talent shows to raise money for library books, field trips, eyeglasses for needy kids and even a baby's heart operation. "Today more than 500 people are involved in Club B.A.D.D.D. events – and we've become the "cool" thing to do at school!"

Gabriella was a National Honoree in The 1999 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. She is now a youth spokesperson for the Hispanic Youth Conference, and speaks nationwide about Club B.A.D.D.D. and violence prevention.

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And The Spirit Is Catching...

September is National School Success Month. Minnesota's **Nathan Bertelsen,** 18, wanted to teach at-risk elementary students in inner city Minneapolis that learning was fun. He pioneered "Backpack Tutors," a group of trained student volunteers who make weekly visits to elementary schools in urban Minneapolis.

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month. 17-year-old **Laura Berman** wanted to share her joy of reading with third graders in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. She developed a library awareness project that included a classroom program, personal library cards and a free tee-shirt (purchased with donations) with the slogan: "Your library card....don't leave home without it!"

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 Labor Day	5 School's open. Start a student welcoming committee to make new students feel comfortable at school.	6 Do It! Day Don't Procrastinate.	7 National Sobriety Checkpoint Week www.madd.org (September 3-9)	8 International Literacy Day www.usbby.org Share your favorite book with a child.	9
10 Grandparent's Day www.grandparents-day.net Adopt a grandparent at a local retirement home.	11	12 National Farm Safety Week www.nsc.org (September 10-16)	13	14	15 Summer Olympics begin in Australia www.olympic.org	16 International Ozone Day www.unep.ch/ozone International Coastal Clean-Up Day www.cmc-ocean.org
17 Citizenship Day www.civiced.org Plan a voter registration drive at your school to register 18 year-olds to vote in next month's election.	18	19 International Day of Peace www.people4peace.com	20 Constitution Week www.nara.gov (September 17-23)	21 World Gratitude Day	22 First Day of Autumn	23
24 National Good Neighbor Day Do a good deed for your neighbor.	25 National Day of Remembrance for Murdered Children www.pomc.com	26 Johnny Appleseed's Birthday Host a tree planting party at the local park.	27 Religious Freedom Week (September 24-30)	28	29 Banned Books Week www.ala.org (September 24-30)	30 Rosh Hashana

Start planning your application for the 2001 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards now. The deadline is coming up. For an application, ask your school principal, Girl Scout leader, or 4-H leader, or visit www.prudential.com.

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SEPTEMBER IS

- Cholesterol Education Month (www.nhlbi.nih.gov)
- Library Card Sign-Up Month (www.ala.org)
- Baby Safety Month (www.jpma.org)

OCTOBER 2000

Brandon's Garden of Life

Brandon Mulcunry has been a Boy Scout since the second grade, so volunteering has always been a part of his life. Clothing drives, building projects, park clean-up days. You name it, he's done it.

So why did he decide to plant a garden?

Do a math problem and you'll understand.

St. Elizabeth's House serves over 200,000 meals each year to needy people in Hartford County, Connecticut. Its annual budget? $39,000.

Divide $39,000 by 200,000 meals for hungry men, women and children. That's less than 20 cents per meal.

Get it? Brandon did.

His Scout troop and their families volunteered to help plant, water, weed, pick and deliver the produce. They rented a plot of land from the city for $25. Then, Brandon made a list of everything required for a large garden like seeds, tools, and fertilizer. He looked up the addresses and phone numbers of companies selling those products, then got busy writing letters and making phone calls. The response? "Everything we needed was donated." Brandon was in business – the garden business.

Was it easy? "No, but it was worth it." After four months of pulling weeds, watering, and fighting beetles on the eggplant vines and mold on tomato plants, they started harvesting. "We picked tomatoes, peppers, string beans, zucchini, eggplant, beets, squash, turnips, lettuce, parsley, and basil – over three tons of vegetables."

"I planted a garden because I thought it might help some needy people," says Brandon. "As we delivered boxes of produce every week, I had a chance to put real faces on the people I was helping. Seeing the smiles on the men, women, and children at that shelter made me realize that I wasn't just cultivating a garden of tomatoes, beans and peppers – I was helping others grow a garden of life."

Brandon was a National Honoree in The 1997 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Now a senior in high school, Brandon is teaching younger members of his Scout troop to assume responsibility for the "garden of life" when he leaves for college in the fall of 2001.

"Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person."
Mother Teresa

And The Spirit Is Catching...

Happy Halloween! "Trick or Treat So Others Can Eat!" is what people hear in Westminster, Colorado, on the day before Halloween. 18-year-old **Dawn Stockwell** created this special canned food collection drive when she found out that Westminster's Food Bank of the Rockies faced a serious shortage of food for homeless and needy people.

October 8-14 is Fire Prevention Week. 13-year-old **Cory Snyder** (of Bowie, Maryland) organized a children's fund-raising campaign called "Project Rescue Vision" and collected more than $25,000 to buy an Infrared Imaging System (IRIS) for local firefighters. Having this equipment means firefighters can see through smoke and darkness to find people – and save lives. Later, his brother Brock led another fund-raising effort to provide more life-saving equipment to the local fire department.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 International Day of the Elderly www.un.org	**2** United Nations World Habitat Day www.un.org	**3** National 4-H Week www.fourhcouncil.edu (October 1-7)	**4** Child Health Day www.dhhs.gov	**5**	**6** It's Crime Prevention Month. Coordinate a toy gun trade-in for children in your community. Trade violent toys for safe ones.	**7** It's Computer Learning Month. Teach an Internet course to senior citizens.
8 יום כפור Yom Kippur begins at Sundown	**9** Columbus Day	**10** Fire Prevention Week www.nfpa.org (October 8-14)	**11** National School Lunch Week www.asfsa.org (October 8-14)	**12**	**13**	Peace Corps Birthday **14**
15 National Character Counts Week www.charactercounts.org (October 15-21)	World Food Day **16** www.fao.org 	**17** National Day of Concern About Young People And Gun Violence www.pledge.org International Day for the Eradication of Poverty www.un.org	**18** Teen Read Week www.ala.org (October 15-21)	**19**	**20** YWCA Week Without Violence www.ywca.org (October 15-21)	**21** America's Safe Schools Week www.nssc1.org (October 18-24)
22	**23**	United Nation's Day **24** www.un.org	**25** National Magic Week www.magicsam.com (October 25-31) Perform a magic show at a local hospital.	**26** National Red Ribbon Week for Drug-Free Youth www.nfp.org (October 22-28)	**27**	**28** Make A Difference Day www.pointsoflight.org
29 Daylight Savings Time ends Turn that clock back!	**30** Plan to trick-or-treat for Unicef to help needy children in other countries. Get materials at www.unicefusa.org	**31** Halloween	DEADLINE for 2001 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards applications www.prudential.com/community/spirit			

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OCTOBER IS • Diversity Awareness Month • Computer Learning Month (www.computerlearning.org) • National Youth Against Tobacco Month • Crime Prevention Month (www.ncpc.org) • Domestic Violence Awareness Month (www.ncadv.org)

NOVEMBER 2000

Wednesday 1

Family Literacy Day
www.famlit.org
Host a school-wide family read-a-thon. Award prizes to students whose families read the most books.

Thursday 2

Friday 3

Saturday 4

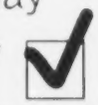
Did your mom get a free turkey at the grocery store? Donate it to the Food Bank for the upcoming holiday.

Sunday 5

Monday 6

Tuesday 7

Election Day



Urge your parents to vote, and if you're 18, be sure to go to the polls.

Wednesday 8

Random Acts of Kindness Week
www.actsofkindness.org
(November 5-11)

Thursday 9

Friday 10

Saturday 11

Veteran's Day

Sunday 12

National Geography Awareness Week
www.nationalgeographic.com
(November 12-18)

Sponsor a "geography bee" to raise money for needy children in foreign countries.

Monday 13

World Kindness Day

Tuesday 14

Wednesday 15

Key Club International Week
(November 12-18)

Eric is Stepp'n Up

Have you ever counted all the shoes in your closet? There are brand-name sneakers (two or three pairs), the flats and loafers, dress shoes and yeah, girls, all those pairs of high heels in different heights that coordinate with all those outfits.

Have you ever met anyone who's never, ever had a new pair of shoes? Eric Perlyn has – and it changed his life.

Eric was 13 when he started "Stepp'n Up," a program that provides new shoes for needy children. Using gift money he'd received at his bar mitzvah, Eric took a family of 6 young boys shoe shopping.

It was an amazing afternoon. "As each was fitted, he'd look at his shoes, smile, then leap from his chair to march, stomp and whirl all over that shoe store. I knew then and there that I had to do this for more kids."

"Shoes do more than cover feet, you know," Eric says. "They play a significant role in how children feel about themselves. To many kids, new

www.cbcbooks.org (November 13-19)	Collect and donate teddy bears for sick children.	or start your own service club.
Thursday 16 Great American Smokeout www.cancer.org	**Friday 17** National Philanthropy Day *American Education Week* *www.nea.org* *(November 12-18)*	**Saturday 18** *National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week* *www.nch.ari.net* *(November 12-18)* Volunteer at a soup kitchen.
Sunday 19	**Monday 20** National Family Volunteer Day www.pointsoflight.org	**Tuesday 21**
Wednesday 22 National Stop the Violence Day, held on the anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Plan a peace march at City Hall.	**Thursday 23** Thanksgiving Day Help prepare and serve a holiday meal for the homeless.	**Friday 24** One month 'til Christmas -- start planning a special trip for needy children in your area to visit Santa.
Saturday 25 International Day Against Violence Against Women. Sponsor a shower and donate all the gifts to a local shelter for abused moms.	**Sunday 26**	**Monday 27**
Tuesday 28	**Wednesday 29**	**Thursday 30**

Ramadan Begins

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many people take shoes for granted, but to these kids a simple pair of shoes can mean the world."

Each year Eric calls a local social services agency to get the names, ages and shoe sizes of 200-300 needy kids. Then he visits local shoe stores, writes manufacturers, speaks to civic and charity groups asking for cash donations, and organizes other students at his school to help "shoe" needy feet.

Shoes? Who would have thought?

Eric Perlyn was a 1996 Prudential Spirit of Community National Honoree. Now a senior at Duke University, he's extended the "Stepp'n Up" program to North Carolina, distributing over 2,000 pairs of shoes to underprivileged children in the Durham area.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

November is Great American Smokeout Month. 18-year-old **Derek Swierczek** (Palatine, Illinois) wanted to help stop underage smoking. He created and led a student anti-smoking campaign, persuading local government officials to have cigarette vending machines permanently removed from his town.

November 22 is National Stop the Violence Day. After reading about school shootings across the United States and then witnessing violence in their neighborhood, 12-year-old **Theo Milonopoulos** and his brother **Niko** (Los Angeles, California) gathered over 10,000 kids' signatures on a petition asking the L.A. City Council to ban the sale of bullets in Los Angeles.

"If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help someone else."

Old Chinese Proverb

NOVEMBER IS

• Child Safety and Protection Month (www.pta.org) • Native American Month
• Peanut Butter Lovers' Month (www.peanutbutterlovers.com)

DECEMBER 2000

Emily's Gifts Go Far

Everybody in the small Appalachian community of Ironton, Ohio, knew Emily's Grandma. "She always had a few extra dollars in her purse to give to somebody whose baby needed medicine or to help a homeless family buy winter coats for their kids," Emily remembers. "My Grandmother never forgot what it was like to be poor. She worked her whole life, volunteered many hours each week and gave away at least half her salary. My Grandma was the kindest person I've ever met."

When Emily's grandmother died, Emily decided to honor her memory by continuing her volunteer work with needy children and their families. "I wanted to find a way to remember Grandma's spirit and goodness," Emily said. "I decided that Christmas was a good time to start."

Emily and her mother compiled a list of everyone they knew who'd grown up in the Appalachian mountain area, then sent each person a letter asking for donations of clothing, toys, books, canned food, and money. "Since these people had first-hand knowledge of the need, I was pretty confident of their response," Emily recalls. She also wrote letters to local stores and other businesses, called the newspapers, and spoke to church and community groups.

During that first Christmas, Emily provided Christmas gifts, food, clothing and other items to over fifty needy families. Since then, hundreds of thousands of dollars in goods and services have been donated to "Grandma's Gifts," the non-profit foundation Emily started to continue her grandmother's legacy. "Grandma's Gifts" also helps provide eyeglasses, medical and dental care, camp scholarships, and books to school libraries and individual children in Appalachia. Teen volunteers from Emily's high school write letters to their Appalachian "Book Buddies," encouraging them to read and learn.

The best part for Emily? "The little things," she answers. "I've seen children who've never owned a book, visited a library, or been inside a fast-food restaurant. We're giving these kids tools to help create a better life for themselves – and the knowledge that someone cares for them."

"Just like my Grandma," she adds with a smile.

Emily was a National Honoree in The 1996 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. In 1999, "Grandma's Gifts" provided Christmas presents to more than 500 children.

"The greatest grace of a gift, perhaps, is that it anticipates and admits of no return."
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

And The Spirit Is Catching...

December 1 is World AIDS Day. 13-year-old **Jamie Morales** (Wichita, Kansas) lost her mother and two other close relatives to AIDS. She now speaks to other students and community groups about both preventing HIV and AIDS and its impact on children like her.

December is National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month. 18-year-old **Joshua Hewitt** (Perry, New York) staged a simulated traffic accident in front of his high school to graphically demonstrate the horrors of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Day of the Child World AIDS Day www.aaworldhealth.org	2
3 International Day of Disabled Persons www.un.org Help the wheelchair-bound in your community by performing simple chores.	4	5 International Volunteer Day www.unv.org	6 It's National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Month Host a school assembly about the dangers of drinking and driving.	7 Pearl Harbor Day	8	9
10 Human Rights Day www.un.org/rights Speak out against oppression and injustice.	11	12	13 Collect holiday gifts for the needy.	14	15 U.S. Bill of Rights Day www.nara.gov Celebrate our freedom of choice.	16
17	18 Gather a group of friends and go caroling at a nursing home.	19	20 Take a pledge to make the holiday spirit last all year.	21 Hanukkah First Day of Winter 	22	23 Shovel snow for a disabled neighbor.
 24 Bake an extra plate of holiday cookies for a senior citizen who needs some cheer.	25 Christmas	26 Kwanzaa begins	27 Ramadan Ends	28	29	30 Remind your parents - it's the last chance to give tax-deductible donations to charity in 2000.
31						

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DECEMBER IS • National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month (www.3dmonth.org) • Universal Human Rights Month

JANUARY 2001

Brian's Rainbow

Dear Brian,
My best friend is black, and people sometimes give me a hard time...I love her like a sister, and when we are together it's like I'm not white and she isn't black. There are no colors. We're just people, friends having fun.

Sincerely,
Amanda

Amanda is just one of over 20,000 people who have written to Brian Harris and his international pen-pal service, "Friendship Sees No Color." Since 1992, Brian's club has matched people of different races together as pen-pals.

As a child of biracial parents, Brian knows what it's like to be caught in the middle of racial controversy. "It's almost like I'm an undercover racist detector."

Brian was 11 years old when race riots broke out in south-central Los Angeles. "We live a good thirty minutes away, but you could see the smoke from our house," he remembers. "Sometimes you imagine we've come a long way and that the races are coming together. The riots lit up the situation and showed the reality."

Brian brainstormed his pen-pal idea after seeing one too many television talk shows dealing with interracial issues. "Nobody was trying to show positive things about people of different races. How could people come together if they didn't know anything good about each other?"

Brian launched FSNC by mailing out press releases to newspapers and TV talk shows. As the letters poured in, Brian's entire family got involved in the matching process. "Interested pen-pals send an index card listing their name, address, age, sex and race, plus a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We try to match each person up with someone close to his or her own age. We've gotten letters from across the United States and all over the world."

Brian believes that the friendships he's helped establish provide the best proof of success. "It's really enlightening to hear all these stories," he says. "Attitudes really do change when people have a chance to actually communicate with someone of another race."

Brian Harris was a 1997 Prudential Spirit Of Community National Honoree. As a student at California's Stanford University, he's still in contact with his "Friendship Sees No Color" pen-pals. His younger siblings are currently working to launch a new "FSNC" pen-pal campaign.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

January is National Eye Care Month. 13-year old **Sara Cherry** (Albuquerque, New Mexico) wrote dozens of letters to civic groups and businesses asking people to donate their outdated eyeglasses. Sara's campaign now provides hundreds of eyeglasses to needy people in New Mexico and abroad.

Happy New Year! Start the year off right by starting a school service club. **Erik Reedy** (Topeka, Kansas) founded the Youth Action Coalition, a group of student volunteers from five area high schools who conduct various community service projects.

"Anyone can be great...because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace – a soul generated by love."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Make a resolution to do something once a week to help someone in need.	**1** NEW YEAR'S DAY	**2**	**3**	Trivia Day **4**	**5**	**6** Can you sew? Make blankets and donate them to the local child welfare agency.
7	**8** Elvis Presley's Birthday www.elvispresley.com Host an Elvis Presley look-a-like contest to entertain children and raise money for a good cause.	**9**	**10** Join together with fellow English students to start a tutoring program for elementary students.	**11** International Thank You Day Give thanks by helping someone in need.	**12**	**13**
14	**15** Martin Luther King Day Host a Diversity Day at your school.	**16** Religious Freedom Day	**17**	**18** It's National Birth Defects Month. Sponsor a loose change collection at your school to raise money for the March of Dimes.	**19**	**20** Inauguration Day
21	**22** Celebration of Life Day Count your blessings, then share a few.	**23**	**24** Chinese New Year	**25**	**26** It's National Book Month. Plan a new or gently used book drive and donate them to a homeless shelter.	**27**
Super Bowl Sunday **28** National Popcorn Day	**29**	**30**	**31**			

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Welcome to the United Nations Year of the Volunteer (www.un.org)

JANUARY IS • National Eyecare Month (www.eyenet.org) • National Volunteer Blood Donor Month (www.aabb.org) • National Birth Defects Prevention Month (www.modimes.org) • National Book Month

FEBRUARY

Thursday 1 Freedom Day	Friday 2 National Groundhog Job Shadow Day www.americaspromise.org Groundhog Day	Saturday 3 American Painter's Day Take a needy child on an outing to a museum or art show.
Sunday 4	Monday 5	Tuesday 6 State Honorees of The 2001 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards announced. www.prudential.com
Wednesday 7 It's Dental Health Month. Urge local stores to donate toothbrushes and toothpaste and donate them to homeless children.	Thursday 8 National Girls and Women in Sports Day www.womenssports.org	Friday 9
Saturday 10	Sunday 11 National Inventors Day	Monday 12 Lincoln's Birthday
Tuesday 13 Boy Scouts of America Week www.bsa.scouting.org (February 11-17)	Wednesday 14 Valentine's Day Make and deliver hand-made Valentines to children at the local hospital.	Thursday 15 Susan B. Anthony Day National Crime Prevention Week www.ncpc.org (February 11-17)

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Richie's Heart of Gold

Richie Hiatt has been a Boy Scout since the age of six, so he knew he could organize a walk-a-thon against cancer for his Eagle Scout project. Scouts are always prepared, right?

"I thought I was," Richie recalled, "but then my seven-year-old sister Laci was diagnosed with leukemia. There's no way you can be prepared for that."

There were lots of other kids in the hospital's critical care unit with Laci, many whose families had little or no insurance. "I had to do something, even if it didn't directly help my sister." Richie stated. "You couldn't look at those kids and not do something."

It took several months of planning and hard work before Richie's "Walk On For A Cure For Cancer...Kids Helping Kids" walk-a-thon was ready. Richie made a lot of speeches. The toughest? "Talking in

Friday **16**

Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week (February 11-17)

Saturday **17**

Random Acts of Kindness Day
www.actsofkindness.org
Do something kind for a stranger today.

Sunday **18**

Monday **19**

President's Day

Tuesday **20**

Wednesday **21**

International Friendship Week (February 18-24)

Start a pen-pal club with a class of peers from another country.

Thursday **22**

George Washington's Birthday

Friday **23**

Saturday **24**

Start a friendship club at school for teens to befriend young children who need a positive influence.

Sunday **25**

Eating Disorders Awareness Week
www.edap.org
(February 25-March 4)

Monday **26**

Tuesday **27**

Wednesday **28**

Ash Wednesday/First Day of Lent

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front of two hundred girls and their mothers at a charity luncheon," he grins. "I was really nervous!"

On a clear, sunny day in March, with the "Rocky" movie theme blasting from a public address system, Laci and two other children with cancer led over two hundred participants around the track. "I'll never forget the smiles and tears of joy on everybody's faces when Laci and the other kids broke through the banner at the finish line," Richie said. "No question about it: all of us won that day."

Richie's walk-a-thon raised over $15,000 for the Parents Against Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides free transportation, check-ups, medical supplies and other necessities to needy cancer victims and their families.

Richie himself learned some lessons from his walk-a-thon experience. "First, I learned how easy it was to take the people you love for granted," he said. "I won't do that again."

Richie's second lesson? "If you really believe in yourself and your cause, others will, too."

Richie Hiatt was a National Honoree in The 1998 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Currently a junior in high school, he continues his Scout involvement and commitment to community service. Younger sister Laci is nine years old, back in school, and in remission from leukemia.

"If you think about what you ought to do for other people, your character will take care of itself."
President Woodrow Wilson

And The Spirit Is Catching...

Cheryl Barbee (13, Boise, Idaho) created "Support Our Siblings," a group for children with chronically ill siblings. "SOS" members meet regularly to share their anxieties and needs with counselors and other children in similar circumstances.

February 11-17 is Child Passenger Safety Week. 18-year-old **Sara McDonnall** (Lamar, Colorado) wants kids to "Buckle Up With Bucklebear." Using a large bear puppet, coloring books and a lively, fun-filled program, she's educated more than 1000 preschool students about seat belt safety.

FEBRUARY IS • African American History Month (www.blackhistory.eb.com) • Children's Dental Health Month (www.ada.org) • American Heart Month (www.americanheart.org) • Canned Foods Month (www.mealtime.org) • World Understanding Month (www.rotary.com)

MARCH 2001

Pettus Leads By Example

"You have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose."
Dr. Seuss

Pettus Randall is only 17, but he's already providing powerful role models for thousands of young children across the United States. His reading assistance program, "Read & Lead," has linked over 20,000 elementary students with high school "reading buddies."

"On the surface it helps kids learn to read," Pettus says, "but what it really does is give them a love of books by showing them that reading is fun, and not something you only do in school. The kids also learn from positive teen role models."

Pettus developed the "Read & Lead" concept as a service project for high school Key Clubs in his area. "Little kids look up to teenagers. They'll listen when a high school kid tells them something, because they want to be just like them."

"Read & Lead" volunteers sign up for an hour of after school time each week at a local elementary school. The elementary extended-day director or school principal links volunteers up with specific children. Each week, the child and his or her teen mentor check a book out from the school library. "Half the time they read, but sometimes they just talk and have fun," Pettus explains. "It's important to build a relationship that encourages learning but also gives kids a positive role model."

Pettus has taken his "Read & Lead" program across the United States and Canada via a web site (www.readandlead.com), mailing campaign, newsletter and dozens of speeches to Key Clubs, churches and other community groups.

In spite of the hours he spends promoting "Read & Lead," Pettus still makes time for his own reading buddy, 6-year-old Joseph. "Joseph's dad had to break off our session early one day because Joseph had a basketball game. The little guy started tearing up and made me promise to come back that week and read another book. I knew then that all of us who came back week after week weren't just going through the motions – we really were making a difference."

Pettus was a National Honoree in The 1999 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. He has continued to expand his "Read & Lead" program, both on a local and national level. Over 5,000 "Read & Lead" starter kits have been requested by schools and other community organizations across the United States and Canada. Request your kit at the Read & Lead website at www.readandlead.com.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

March is Music in Our Schools Month. 13-year-old **Shannon Blevins** (Columbus, Mississippi) wanted to share the joys of singing and musical fellowship, so he created (and now directs) the popular youth "New Hope Gospel Choir." Shannon arranges most of the group's music, leads regular after-school rehearsals and conducts frequent performances at both school and community functions.

March 4-10 is National PTA Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week. **Jenny Hungerford** (18, Orfordville, Wisconsin) spent almost 3 years of her life hooked on drugs and running away from home. After her recovery, she wrote a skit based on her true-life experiences as a teen addict. Jenny has presented her motivational drug-prevention program to over 250 schools, community groups, treatment facilities, and youth conferences across Wisconsin.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 International Day of the Seal. Help to save an endangered species	Dr. Seuss' Birthday **2** Read Across America Day www.nea.org Read a book to a little buddy or share some green eggs & ham!	**3**
4	**5** It's Youth Art Month. Work with your art class to make paintings and donate them to the local homeless shelter	**6** Save Your Vision Week www.aonet.org (March 4-10)	**7** National PTA Drug & Alcohol Awareness Week www.pta.org (March 4-10)	**8** International Women's Day www.un.org Celebrate women in history who have advanced women's rights	**9**	**10** Harriet Tubman Day
11 Plant a Flower Day	**12** American Camp Week (March 11-17) Host a fund-raiser to sponsor camp scholarships for needy kids	**13**	**14** Girl Scout Week www.gsusa.org (March 11-17)	**15** Absolutely Incredible Kid Day www.campfire.org 1-888-2KidDay	**16** Freedom of Information Day www.ala.org Start a youth newspaper and donate the proceeds to charity	**17** St. Patrick's Day www.st-patricks-day.com
18	**19** National Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week www.inhalants.org (March 18-24)	**20** First Day of Spring (Vernal Equinox 8:31 a.m. EST) Spring is here. Plant a garden now, and plan to donate the harvest to the local food bank	**21** International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination www.un.org	**22** World Day for Water. Work with your town's environmental committee to start a water conservation program	**23** American Chocolate Week www.candyusa.org (March 18-24)	**24** It's National Mental Retardation Awareness Month. Start a bowling league for mentally retarded kids
25	**26** Islamic New Year	**27**	**28** National Agriculture Week www.edu-ag.org (March 25-31)	**29**	**30**	**31**

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MARCH IS
- National Mental Retardation Awareness Month (www.thearc.org)
- Youth Art Month (781-293-4100)
- National Nutrition Month (www.eatright.org)
- National Women's History Month (www.nwhp.org)
- Music in Our Schools Month (www.menc.org)
- National Middle Level Education Month (www.nmsa.org)

APRIL 2001

Amber's Earthly Mission

Amber Novotny's mission has a countdown. "If we don't do something now to help the earth renew and replenish its resources, we aren't going to have anything left for those who follow us. We have to recycle, and we have to do it now."

Amber started collecting newspapers in her garage for a Future Homemakers of America Peer Education project. "My town, like many other rural South Dakota communities, was struggling to comply with the new environmental laws and yet remain within its limited financial resources. I thought I could help."

Soon the family cars were parked out on the street. "The garage was stacked with paper from floor to ceiling," Amber remembers. "My dad was really good about it, but I could tell he wanted his garage back."

Amber requested help from the Rosholt Town Council, which was so impressed with the teen's knowledge and enthusiasm that it put her in charge of Rosholt's recycling program. A vacant city building was provided. Amber made flyers announcing the hours of the new center and listing acceptable items, then wrote articles about recycling for the local newspaper.

The response? "Overwhelming. We collected thousands of glass and plastic bottles, jars and tin cans plus tons of newspaper, magazines and office paper. People brought bags of recyclables, met their friends and stayed to socialize. It really pulled our town together."

In the process of educating both her town and herself about recycling, Amber's also learned another valuable lesson. As she says, "Sometimes you have to do things no one else wants to do, or take a stand on an issue when other people hesitate. If you see a need, you can't wait. You have to get on it by yourself. The clock's ticking on the earth. It's going to take everyone's help to stop the countdown."

Amber Novotny was a National Honoree in The 1997 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Her community activism continues at Concordia College, where she majors in environmental studies, works at the school radio station and volunteers for a variety of school and community projects.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

April 22-28 is Reading is Fun Week. When 18-year-old **Dev SenGupta** (Kent, Washington) learned that most homeless children have no special books and toys to call their own, he organized a collection drive at 19 Seattle-area schools. Over 5,000 donated items were distributed to needy kids through shelters and social service agencies.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. 15-year-old **Brandy Hoskins** (New Albany, Indiana) started a fund-raising "Penny War" between classes at her school, sold awareness ribbons for child abuse prevention, wrote a booklet about preventing child abuse, and coordinated school assemblies on child abuse awareness and prevention.

"We must want for others, not for ourselves alone."

Eleanor Roosevelt

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April Fool's Day **1** Set Your Clocks Forward Day	**2** International Children's Book Day www.usbby.org Donate your old books to a children's shelter.	**3** YMCA Healthy Kids Day www.ymca.net	**4** *Week of the Young Child* *www.naeyc.org* *(April 1-7)*	**5** Kick Butts Day www.tobaccofreekids.org	**6**	**7** World Health Day www.aawhworldhealth.org
Palm Sunday **8** Passover	**9**	**10** *National Garden Week* *www.garden.org* *(April 8-14)* Help a disabled or elderly person till and plant a garden.	**11**	**12** *National Library Week* *www.ala.org* *(April 8-14)*	Good Friday **13** Thomas Jefferson's Birthday	**14** Pan American Day
15 Easter Sunday	**16** *National Organ & Tissue Donation Awareness Week* *www.kidney.org* *(April 15-21)* Raise money to help someone pay for a transplant operation.	**17** Celebrate Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month by volunteering at your local animal shelter.	Paul Revere Day **18** *National Wildlife Week* *www.nwf.org* *(April 15-21)*	**19** It's Child Abuse Prevention Month. Encourage the prom committee to collect toys for abused children instead of tickets.	**20**	**21** March for Parks www.npca.org (April 21 & 22)
22 Earth Day www.earthday.net Organize a team to clean up a local park or stream.	**23** *National TV-Free Week* *www.tvfa.org* *(April 22-28)*	**24** *National Volunteer Week* *www.pointsoflight.org* *(April 22-28)*	**25** *Reading is Fun Week* *www.si.edu/rif* *(April 22-28)*	**26** Take Our Daughters To Work Day www.msfoundation.org	Arbor Day **27** www.arborday.org *Plant a tree.*	**28** *Big Brothers/ Big Sisters Week* *www.bbbsa.org* *(April 22-28)*
29 March of Dimes WalkAmerica www.modimes.org Get moving and help others who can't!	**30** *Friendship Sees No Color Week* *(April 29-May 5)* *Anniversary of the Los Angeles Riots*	**31** It's Poetry Month. Host a poetry reading hour for children at the local library.				

APRIL IS

- *Keep America Beautiful Month (www.kab.org)*
- *Child Abuse Prevention Month (www.childabuse.org)*
- *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month (www.aspca.org)*
- *National U.S. Poetry Month (www.poets.org)*
- *Alcohol Awareness Month (www.ncadd.org)*

MAY 2001

Tuesday 1
It's Older Americans Month. While gearing up for the prom, why not plan a special "senior prom" for members of a local nursing home?

Wednesday 2
Holocaust Remembrance Day
www.ushmm.org

Thursday 3

World Press Freedom Day
www.unesco.org/press-freedom-day

Friday 4

Saturday 5

Cinco de Mayo

Sunday 6
Have you overcome an illness or injury? Start a support group to help others going through the same thing

Monday 7
Top Ten Youth Volunteers of 2001 named in The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.
www.prudential.com

Tuesday 8

World Red Cross Day
www.redcross.org
Volunteer with your local Red Cross.

Wednesday 9
National Family Week
www.familyweek.org
(May 6-12)
Host a family heritage program for children at the local library.

Thursday 10
PTA Teacher Appreciation Week
www.pta.org
(May 6-12)

Friday 11
Be Kind to Animals Week
www.americanhumane.org
(May 6-12)

Saturday 12
Suicide Prevention Week
www.suicidology.org
(May 7-12)

Sunday 13
Mother's Day
Thanks, Mom!

Monday 14

Tuesday 15
International Day of Families
www.un.org

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Lauren's Ageless Friendships

"Resolve to create a good future. It's where you'll spend the rest of your life."
Charles Franklin Kettering

Lauren Garsten has dedicated her young life to the construction of bridges – not the huge spans of concrete and steel crossing rivers, but bridges of communication and love linking people at different stages of life. "I guess you'd have to call them human bridges," she laughs. "Sometimes it involves tearing down a few walls, but that's the easy part."

Lauren first thought of building her human bridges while volunteering at a home for neglected and abused children. "I couldn't stop thinking about the kids. The staff obviously cared, but it was impossible for all the children to get the special, concentrated attention they needed."

"Then I saw a television news story about the growing elderly

Wednesday 16 National Playday for Health Sponsor an outing for children from a local homeless shelter.	**Thursday 17**	**Friday 18** National Historic Preservation Week www.nationaltrust.org (May 13-19)
Saturday 19 Armed Forces Day Make and send greeting cards to U.S. military personnel overseas.	**Sunday 20** National Safe Boating Week www.safeboatingcouncil.org (May 19-25)	**Monday 21** Alcohol and Other Drug-Related Birth Defects Week www.ncadd.org (May 20-26)
Tuesday 22 Buckle Up America Week www.nhtsa.org (May 20-26)	**Wednesday 23**	**Thursday 24**
Friday 25 National Missing Children's Day 1-800-I-AM-LOST Work with the police department to host a child safety program for your neighborhood.	**Saturday 26**	**Sunday 27**
Monday 28 Memorial Day Remember those who died in the service of our country...	**Tuesday 29**	**Wednesday 30** National Senior Health and Fitness Day Host an aerobics class at a retirement center.
Thursday 31 World No-Tobacco Day www.aawhworldhealth.org		

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MAY IS

• National Teen Pregnancy Month (www.teenpregnancy.org)
• Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (www.abcflash.com)
• Older Americans Month (www.aaa.anns.gov) • National Physical Fitness and Sports Month (202-690-9000)

population and their search for activities to help them remain productive members of society. The connection clicked."

Lauren decided to somehow link seniors with neglected children through high school volunteers to help bridge the age gap. "The problem was figuring out how to accomplish this," she remembers. "That took lots of research, phone calls and hard work."

The result? "Trios," a monthly Saturday program. Staff members at both a local retirement center and a home for neglected and abused children select groups of six different individuals each month. The six seniors join six children and six high school volunteers on short field trips, including picnics, bowling, zoos, museums, movies and sports events. A small grant provides ticket money, food and the salary of a child care worker accompanying the group.

The results? "You'd be amazed. It only takes a few minutes before the kids realize that both the seniors and their high school buddies are genuinely interested in them – usually something they've never experienced before. "Everybody gets something out of this. As the walls dividing people crumble and fall, these wonderful human bridges rise in their place. Is it worth it? Absolutely."

Lauren Garsten was a National Honoree in The 1996 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Lauren earned a Bachelor's degree from Harvard University in the spring of 2000, and now directs "Project Health," a non-profit community organization providing basic health services to underprivileged children living in Boston, Massachusetts.

May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. 12-year-old **Max Penning** (Barrington, Illinois) and his band of volunteers bought new sports equipment for inner-city children attending Holy Family Lutheran School by selling over 2,000 pizzas.

May is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month. 17-year-old **Adrien Lopez** (Valdez, Alaska) created and coordinated a series of open forums called "Teens Against Pregnancy." The forums feature real-life stories from young mothers and are designed to educate young girls about the realities and challenges of becoming a teen mother.

JUNE 2001

"I am only one, but still, I am one. I cannot do everything but I can do something. And, because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do what I can."
Helen Keller

10-year-old Aubyn Burnside was outraged when she learned that foster children almost never have a suitcase for their clothes and personal property. Most children move several times while in foster care, usually throwing their belongings in plastic trash bags. "Most adults don't even think about what these kids have to put their stuff in," Aubyn said. "They must feel like garbage themselves."

Aubyn decided to somehow find a used suitcase for each of the over 300 foster children in Catawba County, North Carolina (her home). She asked her family, neighbors, church members, Scouts and 4-H group for help, but collections were slow at first.

Aubyn and her mother Linda spent an afternoon checking thrift stores, buying every suitcase they could find. Turned out they didn't need them. "We laugh about that now," Aubyn smiles. "Within a few weeks we had suitcases all over the house. We'd come home and there'd be 40 or 50 on the front porch. It was amazing."

Now, "Suitcases for Kids" has gone nationwide. Aubyn and her mother hit the road at least once a week, speaking at churches, schools and local community groups. Each time they leave behind a starter kit so other kids can get involved – and a message of hope. "You have to listen to other people to find out what they need," Aubyn says. "Age is no limit. Kids can do whatever they set their mind on doing – and one kid can make a difference."

"It's really hard to ask for money, but an old suitcase? That's easy. There's a lot of children out there who need help. 'Suitcases for Kids' spreads the word – kind-hearted people do the rest."

Aubyn Burnside was a National Honoree in The 1998 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. As a result of her enthusiastic leadership, "Suitcases for Kids" has grown from a local drive to an international nonprofit organization with chapters in all 50 states as well as many foreign countries. In addition, Aubyn now lobbies for funding of mental health services for children in protective care.

For a Suitcases for Kids start-up kit, contact Aubyn at Suitcasesforkids@aol.com

And The Spirit Is Catching...

June 1 is Stand for Children Day. 12-year-old **Katie Eller** (Tulsa, Oklahoma) knew kids at the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless needed cribs, toys and playground equipment, so she decided to open a few 'lemon-aid' stands -- actually over 200 of them -- on street corners all over town. Donated supplies, hundreds of teen volunteers and a blaze of free newspaper and television coverage helped "Lemon-Aid" earn over $27,000 its first two summers of operation.

June 21st is the first day of summer. 17-year-old **Erin Carney** (Baltimore, Maryland) spends her summers as a student volunteer in the Child Life Department at Johns Hopkins Children's Hospital. Her duties include comforting young patients, playing games, reading stories, and sometimes just holding hands with a sick child.

Aubyn Packs A Little Love

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Stand for Children Day www.stand.org	2
3 It's Fireworks Safety Month. Work with the local fire department and hospital to host a fireworks safety workshop for kids.	4	5 World Environment Day www.wildernessvolunteers.org	6	7	8 Plan to start a summer service club where kids can socialize while helping others.	9
10 International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking www.un.org	11	12 *Pediatric AIDS Awareness Week (June 10-16)*	13	14 Flag Day www.flagday.org	15	16 Join Hands Day www.pointsoflight.org Join together with the adults in your community to volunteer.
Father's Day Thanks, Dad! I ♥ Dad 17	18	19 *National Forgiveness Week (June 17-23)*	20 World Juggling Day www.juggle.org/wjd/	Summer Solstice First Day of Summer 21	22	23 The nation's blood supply dips in the summer. Help the local hospital host a summer blood drive.
24 America's Kid's Day	25	26	Helen Keller's Birthday 27 *"One can never consent to creep when one feels the impulse to soar."*	28	29	30

JUNE IS • National Fireworks Safety Month • Children's Awareness Month

Kristen's Champions

JULY 2001

"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

Anonymous

"Go, Kristen," yelled a young girl in the stands. "Go!"

Kristen slid around the third base curve, aiming for home plate and another run for the team. "In the background I caught a glimpse of my number one fan, Taylor, her tiny body lost amidst the shiny metal and chrome of her wheelchair. Taylor has cerebral palsy, is vision impaired, and will never use her legs to run around a baseball diamond," Kristen says.

Because Kristen knew that her friend Taylor needed a chance to hear somebody yell "Go Taylor" as she scored her own home run, Kristen created "Anyone Can Softball." "I wanted Taylor and all the other children and young adults like her to have their chance."

Kristen's mom (a pediatric physical therapist) helped her write a workable plan for "Anyone Can Softball," and gave her a list of people she should contact. The local softball commissioner agreed to help adapt a ballpark for wheelchair accessibility. Then she started calling schools, day care centers, children's clinics, Easter Seals, the United Way, and every other organization that helps physically challenged individuals.

"Anyone Can Softball" is really a simple idea. They play a modified tee-ball game, using the same position assignments and basic rules as everyone else. Every physically challenged player is assigned an assistant or buddy. "Buddies" are there to help every member of the team attain the same level of play. They push wheelchairs, pick up balls, help shaky arms swing a bat, steady a catcher's mitt, and (most important of all) cheer their buddies on.

After spending the winter making phone calls, writing letters, conducting surveys and distributing information, Kristen set the schedule and the league began playing ball. Seventy physically-challenged players hit the field that first season, plus dozens of buddies and even more eager parents cheering from the stands. They played their championship game at the National Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

"My best memory? Easy. That was when I stood up and yelled, 'Go Taylor, Go!' as a little girl in a shiny chrome wheelchair passed third on her way home."

Kristen Deaton was a National Honoree in The 1997 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Currently, Kristen is a junior at the University of Oklahoma, where she studies communication disorders (specializing in pediatric audiology), works with a church youth group, volunteers for Special Olympics, and continues spreading the word about the "Anyone Can Softball" program. New chapters of "Anyone Can Softball" are spreading across the United States.

And The Spirit Is Catching...

July is National Anti-Boredom Month. 18-year-old **Angela Lind** (Flandreau, South Dakota) wanted young children to reach for a good book instead of turning on their television sets. She started a summer reading hour and sign language lessons for elementary-age children at her local library, developing games and other fun activities around the themes of the stories she chose.

July 4th is Independence Day. 18-year-old **Tyler Mann** created a ongoing voter registration program at his high school (Roswell, Georgia). Through regular voter registration drives and personalized birthday letters sent to all students reaching their 18th birthday, Tyler hopes to convince every eligible student that the price of our nation's independence includes the responsibility of voting.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 National Literacy Day www.literacyvolunteers.org Volunteer with a local chapter of Literacy Volunteers of America.	3	4 Independence Day Host a block party and ask guests to bring canned goods to donate to the local food pantry.	5	6	7 Host a backyard carnival to raise money for a special cause.
8 Liberty Bell Day	9 National POW/MIA Recognition Day	10 National Therapeutic Recreation Week www.nrpa.org (July 8-14)	World Population Day www.un.org 11 	12 First U.S. zoo opened in 1874 (Philadelphia). Sponsor a trip to the zoo for children or adults who need a dayof fun.	13	14
15 Are you proficient in a foreign language? Volunteer to help immigrants learn English.	16	17 Like to ride horses? Organize a riding program for disabled or underprivileged children.	18	19	 20 Moon Day "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." (Neil Armstrong, the first astronaut to set foot on the moon, July 20, 1969.)	21
22	23 Ice cream cone invented in 1904. Throw an ice cream social for underprivileged kids.	24 Puerto Rico's Constitution Day	25	26	27	28 Joseph Lee Day www.kaboom.org Honoring the founder of American playgrounds. Build a safe playground with KABOOM!
29	30 Parent's Day	31				

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JULY IS • National Ice Cream Month • National Recreation and Parks Month (www.nrpa.org) • Anti-Boredom Month (201-763-6392)
• National Hot Dog Month

AUGUST 2001

Wednesday 1 World Wide Web Anniversary Help a non-profit organization design a web site. National Night Out www.nationaltownwatch.org	Thursday 2 *International Clown Week (August 1-7)*	Friday 3
Saturday 4 *Simplify Your Life Week (August 1-7)*	Sunday 5 Unity in Diversity Day www.aaha-info.org Sisters' Day Be a big sister to a child who needs one.	Monday 6
Tuesday 7	Wednesday 8	Thursday 9
Friday 10	Saturday 11 *National Smile Week (August 6-12)* Volunteer with Operation Smile, an organization that performs free reconstructive surgery for children in third world countries.	Sunday 12
Monday 13 Family Day www.kiwanis.org	Tuesday 14	Wednesday 15 National Relaxation Day Take an underprivileged child to the park or beach.
Thursday 16	Friday 17 Host a used clothing drive and donate the clothes to a homeless shelter.	Saturday 18

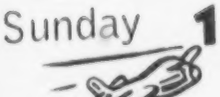
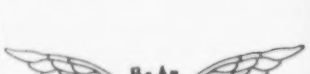
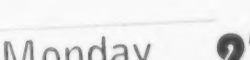
Jason's Community Challenge

11-year-old Jason Jones was a bright, athletic "latch key kid." He spent most of his free time hanging out with friends in a dreary, trash and weed-filled lot next to his mobile home park in Columbus, Georgia.

With nothing to do and no adult supervision, Jason might have chosen to follow others from his neighborhood down a path towards drugs and gangs. He didn't.

"My mother always told me that if I'm going to respect myself, I have to learn positive ways of dealing with the challenges around me, no matter what they are."

Jason organized his friends into a group he called the "Neighborhood Advisory Committee." Their first project? "We wanted a clean, safe place for kids to play." Using donations and a lot of "kid-power hours," the group cleaned up trash, painted over graffiti, picked weeds and planted flowers. Jason then convinced the park manager to sponsor a monthly clean-up day

Sunday **19**  National Aviation Day www.faa.gov/education Encourage the adults in your life to donate frequent flyer miles to charity.	Monday **20**	Tuesday **21**  Be An Angel Day Be a blessing in someone's life.
Wednesday **22**	Thursday **23**	Friday **24**
Saturday **25**	Sunday **26** Women's Equality Day	Monday **27**  Be Kind to Humankind Week (August 26-31) Say something nice to everyone you meet.
Tuesday **28**	Wednesday **29** It's National Back-to-School Month. Collect school supplies from local businesses and donate them to elementary students who can't afford their own.	Thursday **30**
Friday **31**		

and "Litter Free" campaign.

The neighborhood clean-up was a great success. Jason and his committee went on to sponsor food and clothing drives, tutoring and child care for the park's younger children, and monthly neighborhood pot luck dinners.

"I believe that all of us have a responsibility to try as hard as we can to change things that are wrong."

Jason was a National Honoree in The 1998 Prudential Spirit Community Awards. He's expanded his community activism by volunteering to lead a Cub Scout troop and mentoring 6th graders at a neighborhood elementary school.

August is Children's Vision and Learning Month. 13-year-old **Michelle Blanc** (Redwood Valley, California) takes guide-dog puppies into her home, monitoring each dog's development, teaching basic obedience commands, and providing the love each dog needs to learn how to be a caring, helpful companion for the blind.

August 1-7 is International Clown Week. 16-year-old **Aaron Romero** (Honolulu, Hawaii) pulls on the baggy pants and yarn wig of "Sunshine" the clown to perform a popular magic show and clown act at hospitals, homeless shelters, senior centers and fundraising events for the families of critically-ill children.

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."
Anne Frank

AUGUST IS • National Parks Month (www.npca.org) • National Back-To-School Month (www.ob.org) • Children's Vision and Learning Month (800-927-2382) • National Inventor's Month

CATCH THE SPIRIT!

...and make a world of difference every day of the year!

Why Volunteer?

Young people today are so busy with school, part-time jobs, college preparation, athletics and other social activities. So, it was hard to imagine that kids had time to volunteer, until we created The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Through this awards program, which honors young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism, we have had the chance to meet some truly fascinating young people – young people who create a few extra minutes each day to lend a hand to those in need.

You met some of these students whose stories were featured in this Catch the Spirit community service calendar. Remember Emily Douglas and the charity she created, "Grandma's Gifts?" Emily says she volunteers because "it makes my heart feel good." Eric Perlyn, who you read about in November, volunteers because he wants to give something back to his community. What you may not know is that volunteering is fun, which is why Kristen Deaton, the founder of Anyone Can Softball and our July honoree, volunteers.

Every person who volunteers is inspired by a very personal reason, but the end result is always the same – volunteering makes communities better places to live. And that's why Prudential and the National Association of Secondary School Principals created The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.

Since the program started in 1995, we are proud to say that nearly 25,000 young people across the country have been honored by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards at the local, state, and national level. Will you be next? As we embark on our sixth annual program, the 2001 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, we invite you to apply for the volunteer project you're involved in. And, if you're not currently volunteering, we hope this calendar gave you some great ideas from young people who have truly caught the spirit of volunteerism. We hope their spirit is contagious.

Prudential

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Caught the Spirit? Great!

Share it with Prudential and be recognized!

What are the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards?

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is a national recognition program honoring young people in middle and high school grades for outstanding acts of community service.

How does the program work?

In early September, program information and application forms are mailed to middle and high school principals, Girl Scout councils and county 4-H organizations throughout the U.S. They collect applications from interested youth by October 31, 2000, and select one Honoree for every 1,000 students or members. From these local honorees, the top high school volunteer and top middle school volunteer in each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are named State Honorees in early February, 2001. Finally, ten of these State Honorees are named America's top youth volunteers of the year by a national selection committee at a special ceremony in Washington, D.C., in May, 2001.

How do I know I'm eligible to apply for the award?

Simple. You can apply for this award if:

- As of October 31, 2000 you're enrolled as a middle level or high school student in grades 5 through 12 in any state, the District of Columbia or Puerto Rico (except for employees of NASSP, Prudential and other participating organizations and their children.)
- You're involved in a volunteer activity that occurs at least in part after September 1, 1999.
- You complete an application form and submit it to your school principal, Girl Scout council or 4-H organization by October 31, 2000.

How do I obtain an application?

Easy! Ask your principal, 4-H coordinator or Girl Scout leader, call (973) 802-4568, or visit The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards web site at www.prudential.com/community.

What do honorees win?

- Local Honorees receive a Certificate of Achievement from their schools, Girl Scout councils, or 4-H clubs.
- State Honorees receive an award of $1,000, a silver medallion and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., with a parent or guardian for a series of national recognition events in May of 2001. Four runners-up in each state receive bronze medallions, and other top applicants may receive state Certificates of Excellence.
- National Honorees receive an additional award of $5,000, a gold medallion and a crystal trophy for their schools or youth organizations.

A History of Community Service

- The concept of service can be traced back to ancient Greece, and in this country back to our start, as highlighted in the works of Alexis de Toqueville.
- In the 19th century many service and youth organizations started in response to the growing social needs of this country. These organizations which relied on volunteers included YMCA, 4-H, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.
- In the early 20th century the first Volunteer Center was established to recruit and place volunteers in response to the war effort. After World War I, Volunteer Centers turned their attention to the peace time need for volunteers.
- In the 1930's, America's first national service bill was passed by Congress, establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC put young men to work building roads, clearing forest trails and developing our nation's infrastructure during the Depression.
- In the 1960's President Kennedy created the Peace Corps to send Americans abroad to assist underdeveloped countries. A few years later, under President Johnson, the Domestic Volunteer Service Act was passed, which established VISTA, Volunteers in Service to America.
- In 1990, the National and Community Service Act was passed. It supported national service demonstration projects, youth corps and service programs in K-12 schools and colleges and universities. It also funded The Points of Light Foundation.
- In response to President Clinton's call in his inaugural address for all Americans to participate in a "season of service," the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 was passed.

–Excerpted from The Prudential Youth Leadership Institute. © 1995, Center for Creative Leadership.

Additional Resources for Teen Volunteers

- America's Charities
  800-458-9505
  www.charities.org
- America's Promise
  800-365-0153
  www.americaspromise.org
- American National Red Cross
  703-206-7410
  www.redcross.org
- America the Beautiful Fund
  202-638-1649
  www.america-the-beautiful.org
- Amnesty International USA
  www.amnestyusa.org
- Boy Scouts of America
  972-580-2000
  www.bsa.scouting.org
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America
  800-854-CLUB
  www.bgca.org
- Child Welfare League of America
  202-638-2952
  www.cwla.org
- Corporation for National Service
  202-606-5000
  www.nationalservice.org
- Earth Force
  703-299-9400
  www.earthforce.org
- Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America
  703-476-4900
  www.fcclainc.org
- Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
  202-852-8000
  www.gsusa.org
- Girls Incorporated
  212-689-3700
  www.girlsinc.org
- Habitat for Humanity International
  912-924-6935
  www.habitat.org
- IMPACT Online
  www.impactonline.org
- International Key Club
  1-800-KIWANIS, ext. 247
- National Association of Service and Conservation Corps
  202-737-6272
  www.nascc.org
- National Crime Prevention Council
  202-466-6272
  www.ncpc.org
- National 4-H Council
  301-961-2973
  www.fourhcouncil.edu
- National Service Resource Center
  800-860-2684
  www.etr-associates.org/NSRC/
- National Youth Leadership Council
  612-631-3672
  www.nylc.org
- Points of Light Foundation
  202-729-8000
  www.pointsoflight.org
- Public Allies
  202-822-1188
- Quest International
  800-446-2700
  www.quest.edu
- YMCA of the USA
  312-977-0031
  www.ymca.net
- YWCA of the USA
  212-273-7800
  www.ymca.org
- Youth Volunteer Corps of America
  913-432-YVCA

Young Leaders Catch the Community Spirit

Youth Leadership Institute Trains Tomorrow's Leaders

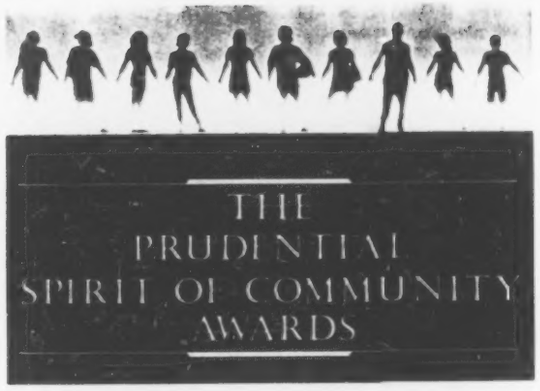
The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is just one element of a broad initiative intended to encourage young people to serve their communities. Another is The Prudential Youth Leadership Institute, a comprehensive and challenging series of lessons that aims to prepare youth for future roles as community leaders. The curriculum features lessons in community analysis, goal-setting, team-building, project planning, decision making, and other leadership dynamics. As a graduation project, the young students of the Institute design and implement a volunteer activity in their communities.

"By combining classroom instruction with real world application, young people leave the Institute more prepared and confident to tackle the issues affecting their communities," says Christy Langan of The Points of Light Foundation, program manager for The Prudential Youth Leadership Institute. "Institute graduates see themselves as individuals who can truly make a difference, and are ready to do so."

Since the Institute's inception in 1996, over 500 adults from organizations in more than 40 states have been certified to deliver the Institute curriculum. Karen Bogues, of the YMCA in Sarasota, Florida, was one of the first trainers certified. "This program provides an opportunity for us to reach the youth in our community and invest in our future, and theirs, by providing them with leadership skills and encouraging a lifelong commitment to serving others."

Adult representatives of youth, volunteer, service, or other community organizations who become certified may bring the Institute's curriculum directly to young people in their communities. Train-the-trainer seminars are offered throughout the year in various locations. For an application and more information, please call the Points of Light Foundation at (202) 729-8142, or visit www.pyli.org.

POINTS OF LIGHT FOUNDATION



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